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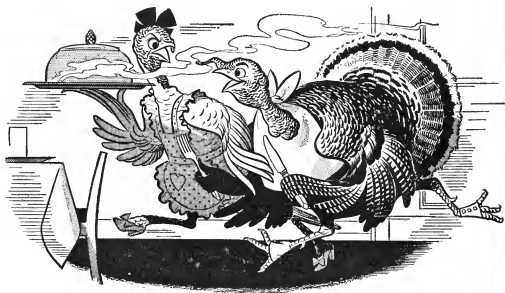
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Vol. XV, No. 3

MARTHA TRASK, Editor

January, 1944



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By PEGGY GADDIS

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# Love NUMEROLOGY

By SYLVION

**D**ECEMBER, the twelfth month with the vibration of 3, is a period of expression and glamour and those born in December should make the most of natural charm if they would get the most out of life and love. The December girl who fails to express herself as Nature intended never finds the true happiness which is hers for the taking.

She is usually talented and has strong emotions. She makes a good artist, author, hostess, entertainer or social secretary. She must guard against sensitivity and conceit. Purple is her color symbol.

## The Aloof Type

For some reason or other, the December-Number 12 girl has a tendency to be aloof and passive, although her heart tells her to be enthusiastic and responsive. Perhaps this is Nature's way of testing a December character to see if she can win by her own logic and strength of vision.

After all, life seems to be some kind of a refining process, for even gold is not pure when in the earth. It has to be refined and hammered and put through a process of pounding, before it shines in all its glory.

The December girl is that kind of metal, too. She must meet pressure and overcome it by the sheer luster of her personality.

## A Typical December Girl

Gloria Ferguson was a typical December girl—strong in feeling but hesitant in her desire to express it. Some friend had ad-

vised her not to make a fuss over any man, for that would make him too sure of her. Thus, every time a fellow took her out, she was reserved and indifferent.

Even when she met Charles Berthoud and knew that she loved him, she hesitated about showing affection for him for fear she might lose him.

At first, Charles didn't mind it. He called her a timid bird and attributed her behavior to her femininity. She was friendly of course, and seemed to be gay at times, but never once did she act as though she were thrilled. It was just "Thank you" when he brought her a box of candy—never a hug and kiss or "My darling—how thoughtful!"

## A Rival

Then competition came—Mary Demarest, the girl of the welfare club who perhaps overdid everything in trying to make other people work hard at club activities. Mary went to town, of course, on Charles—for Charles was obliging and would never hesitate to help out on all matters, even working late arranging decorations for the club ball.

For a while, Gloria didn't mind, for she sensed the insincerity on Mary's part—but when she saw Charles looking at Mary altogether too often and too fondly, Gloria began to worry. "Has Charles fallen for her glamour?" she wondered.

Finally, one night after Charles had cancelled a date, evidently to help Mary, Gloria went to see an old friend of hers—a Mrs. Morgan who had once taken care

(Continued on page 10)





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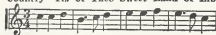


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Better cross that out, too. They don't ever get vacations where Joe's staying.

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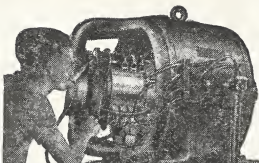
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## LOVE NUMEROLOGY

(Continued from page 6)

of Gloria when she was ill. The old nurse had observed many things in life and Gloria trusted her.

Mrs. Morgan smiled when she heard Gloria's story and the first thing she asked was: "Do you love him, Gloria?"

"With all my heart," said the girl, wisely.

"Did you ever kiss him without his asking?"

"Why, no," said Gloria—"I don't want to throw myself at him."

"Why, child," said the old nurse, "you have more charm than six Marys—why don't you express yourself?"

Then she gave Gloria a long talk. A plan was made. Would it work?

### At the Ball

The night of the ball came around. Gloria wore her gayest dress. At least she could look happy, even though her heart was sad, for she anticipated that Charles would have many dances with Mary.

Charles had to work late that night, and didn't arrive until the ball was well under way. Gloria saw him come in. He looked around. He waved to Gloria and then went over and spoke to Mary.

Gloria saw Mary shake her head indicating that she had promised the next dance to someone else—and then Gloria saw him coming toward her.

Although she wanted to dance with Charles with all her heart and feel his arms around her, she forced a laugh and grabbed the arm of George Dixon, the fellow closest to her. She led him to the punch bowl and asked him to serve her a drink.

This didn't stop Charles. He walked up smiling and asked: "How about the next dance, Gloria?"

Gloria looked up at George and then answered Charles: "I'm dated for the next dance, Charles—but I'll be glad to save the next after that—if you wish."

"Why, certainly, thanks," replied Charles questioningly.

### On With the Dance

At that moment, the music started, and Gloria, pulling George to the center of the floor, started to dance disregarding George's bewilderment.

Several times, Gloria caught Charles' eye watching her. She forced a smile and seemed to be making a fuss over George which

rather embarrassed the big fellow although he enjoyed it. He had never had a girl be so sweet to him before. He didn't realize, of course, that Gloria was merely using him for a purpose.

### "Sweet Enough to Kiss"

The dance was over. The next dance came around and Gloria saw Charles heading her way. She stood alone and as he approached her she looked at him lovingly, eyeing him all over approvingly.

As he came up close, she said: "Gosh, Charles, you look swell in that new suit. Sweet enough to kiss," and she brushed his cheeks with her lips as she melted into his arms.

He stopped dancing and looked at her keenly. "Gloria, darling, have you been drinking?"

Instead of being offended, she laughed. "Why, no, Charles, what made you think that? You make me so proud of you that I want to express my happiness—you know I have always thought you were the grandest fellow in the world."

He sighed—a heavy sigh. "Good heavens, kid—you've taken the breath out of me. Let's sit this out—I want to talk!"

They headed for the veranda. But before he could say anything, Gloria spoke: "I wish you had been here earlier, Charles—I wanted to dance the first dance with you—and the last."

"Honestly?" asked Charles.

"Honestly," said Gloria expressively.

"I don't know what's come over you—but I like it. Do you realize this is the first time that you ever acted as though you liked me?"

"You never asked me."

"Does a fellow have to ask?"

He took her in his arms as the music started. Gloria looked up. "Haven't you the next dance with Mary?"

"Not exactly," said Charles. "Jim and I were going to toss for it. I'll tell him he won."

(Continued on page 91)



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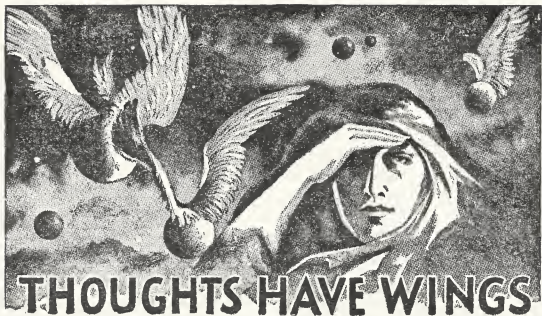
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## You Can Influence Others With Your Thinking!

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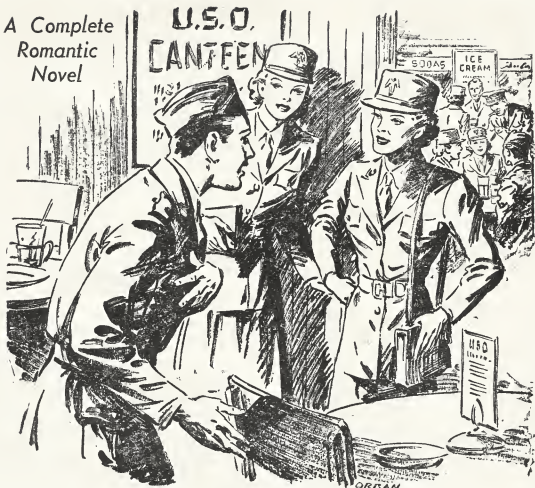
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A Complete  
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A tall soldier paused in front of Taffy and eyed her sharply

# Girl in Khaki

By PEGGY GADDIS

*Stung by the scorn of a handsome stranger, "spoiled, selfish brat" Taffy Lansing leaves luxury behind to enter her country's service—and finds love marching by her side!*

## CHAPTER I

### ONE MAN'S OPINION

**T**AFFY LANSING opened one velvety blue eye and closed it hastily again. Sunlight flooded the luxurious, satin-hung bedroom.

"Go away," Taffy murmured.

"I'm sorry, Miss Taffy," the maid said, "but that's just what he won't do."

"Who won't do what?" Taffy opened the eye again.

"The young man. He won't go away."

"What?" Taffy's other eye sprang open and she blinked in the brilliant light. "A man—here—in my bedroom?"

"Not yet, Miss Taffy, but he threatened to, if you didn't see him."

Taffy sat up. A yawn disturbed the perfect symmetry of her mouth. She thrust her fingers through the famous taffy-colored curls that hung about her sleep-flushed face in charming disorder.

"Throw him out," she told the maid. "And bring my breakfast."

"He's too big, Miss Taffy," the maid protested tearfully. "And it's Higgins' day off."

"Then call the police! For heaven's sake, Martha, do you want me to go down and throw him out myself? What does he want?"

"He's from a newspaper."

Taffy paused in the act of sliding out of bed. That was different. Even a Lansing couldn't afford to offend the papers. There had been too much talk already about the Lansing properties and war profits and the thousands of people they employed. A bad newspaper story might be more than unpleasant; it might be harmful.

She slipped into the crisp, flowered taffeta robe that Martha held for her and impatiently ran a comb through her blond curls. Leaning close to the mirror she deftly traced the lovely curves of her soft mouth with scarlet lipstick.

"Where is this animal, Martha?"

"In the library, Miss Taffy."

Martha held the door and Taffy went swiftly out and down the steps, her taffeta skirts whispering about her ankles with the vigor of her going. She swept into the library and stopped.

A TALL young man turned from the window where he had been staring out at the famous Lansing rose gardens. He had wiry red hair and brown eyes and enormous shoulders which were accentuated by the curious fact that one arm was done up in splints and carried in a sling across his wide chest. His face was lean, with slight hollows in the cheeks, which gave him a strangely capable and stubborn look. He was, Taffy decided, in surprise, very good-looking indeed. "Did you want to see me?" she asked curtly.

"You're Daphne Lansing?" he asked just as curtly. And before she could answer, he nodded sourly. "Of course. How unflattering of me. Though, at that, the picture doesn't do you justice."

"What picture? And will you please tell me what you want? I'm busy this morning!"

"You must be," he said, twisting his mouth as though he were tasting something unpleasant. "It must have been important to make you forget the date you had at nine-thirty."

"Date?" Taffy's eyes widened. "Oh, you mean at the hospital." She gave a little shrug. "I'm sorry. But it was terribly late when I got home and I'm afraid I overslept."

The man lifted himself to the edge of the long mahogany table and eyed her as though she were a worm in his salad. It jerked Taffy erect and her eyes began to flash.

"You overslept!" he said softly and bitterly. "A poor devil shot to pieces, hanging onto your picture with what's left of his hands, and his heart waiting for you to come to the hospital and pin the medal on him—and you overslept!"

It was the contempt more than the words which started that hot flush creeping up Taffy's throat. Unconsciously she pulled her robe together her throat.

"I don't see why I have to account for myself to you," she said frostily. "I promised to go to the hospital, yes. But I don't even know the man."

"How could you know him? He's from the wrong side of the tracks. He never had a decent suit of clothes or a first-class meal until he joined the Marines and went off to fight so people like you would be quite safe back here! He thought you were the most beautiful thing he'd ever seen in his life and he cut a picture of you out of the roto section and carried it with him until Jap bullets messed it up—and him with it."

"Now he's in a hospital, shot into hamburger and his government is giving him a medal for saving half a dozen of his buddies and he scraped up courage for one desperate request. He asked if you could pin that medal on him. You—that picture of you—is all the family he's got. And nobody in the world was ever happier than he when you said you'd come. Do you remember now?"

Taffy's face burned a dull red. But temper fought her shame and embarrassment.

"I told you I meant to go, but I—"

"You overslept," he said rudely. "And





As Kendall's face  
tautened and  
paled, the little  
group about the  
table was acutely  
uncomfortable

good intentions make swell paving blocks on the road to a hot place. Well, your good intentions have crushed that kid who worshiped you. It's small satisfaction I have in telling you what you are. But having started the job, I'll finish it."

"I'm not interested in your opinion of me!" she flared.

"I'll bet you're not. But you'll get it anyway. You're as beautiful—and as phony—as a dime-store doll. You're cheap and hard and selfish and lazy. You're a parasite, taking up room that honest, useful people need, eating food that would better go to men and women who do the world's work and fighting! You're a horrible example and thank heaven there are only a few like you. Have I left anything out?"

**T**AFFY was white now. Only her eyes blazed in her pallid face with the electric blue of a blazing arc.

"Are you quite through?" she demanded.

"Unless I can think of something else."

"Then get out!"

Some of the tension eased out of his face. He settled himself more comfortably on the table edge and with his good hand nursed his injured arm. His eyes traveled over her from the top of her gleaming hair to the rose-tinted toenails peeping through the absurd sandals on her feet.

"If I didn't think you were pretty much a lone specimen, it would be enough to make me a woman hater," he said conversationally. "As a newspaperman, I've done some checking on you."

"I'm flattered!"

"You haven't lifted a finger to help along the war. You're bored by war movies. The books about the sorry mess our world is in are tiresome to you. You've never donated a drop of blood to the Red Cross." His face lighted up. "Oh, yes, you do dance occasionally at one of the smarter officers' clubs!"

Taffy clenched her fists. She knew she was making a mistake to argue, to defend herself, but for the life of her she couldn't help it.

"I've given two completely equipped ambulances to the Red Cross, donated my station wagon and bought thousands of dollars' worth of bonds!"

"Which meant less to you than buying one twenty-five dollar bond meant to me," he said cuttingly. "The station wagon was last year's model so you couldn't be seen in it . . . Look, did it ever occur to you to wonder what would happen to creatures like you if we lost this war?"

"We can't lose," she snapped automatically.

"Oh, yes we can! If we had a few more flutterbrains like you it would be easy to lose. You know what?" he asked, cocking his head. "I'd like to see you in a WAC uniform. That would be a laugh! Those kids are so sincere about helping their country win the war that you'd probably strain your alleged mind trying to understand it. You'd be surprised at how many of them were as pretty as you—and some prettier! Yet they're willing to do the dirty work, the petty detail work because they know every one of them releases a soldier for combat. They drill and study and work and sweat and give up good times and pretty clothes to fight in their own way. Would you?"

He stood up.

"Why ask? The look in your eyes says I'm crazy. The great Taffy Lansing put on a uniform, become a cog in a big machine—work at something that doesn't bring glamour and publicity? I just hope you never do get a brainstorm and decide to join the WACS!"

His eyes swept her again.

"No, Taffy Lansing's got only one job—to keep herself as pretty and as enticing as she can. To make men go a little dizzy when they look at her, to let them see the soft curves of her lips and make them mad with thirst to taste them . . . Say, that's a good idea!"

He moved so unexpectedly that she could not forestall him. His good arm went around her and with overwhelming strength jerked her close. She felt the shock of being crushed against a hard body, felt the wood of the splints digging into her. Then his lips came down hard on hers.

A second later she was spinning away from him.

"Just what I said," he snapped. "You're good to kiss—and good for nothing else!"

He strode out of the room and she heard the door close hard behind him.

## CHAPTER II

## DATE AT THE HOSPITAL

SHE stood clinging to the table, her knees so weak they threatened to let her fall. Her breath came hard between parted lips. She was dazed by the suddenness of what had happened.

She felt bruised and battered, as though she had been swimming upstream against a stiff current. The man had battered down her arrogant self-assurance, her complete conviction that whatever she did was her right and privilege and affected no one save herself. If she were willing to face whatever consequences there might be from her actions, who had the right to criticize her?

She drew a long, hard breath, dropped her face into her hands and shivered. She had never listened to such words as this man had hurled at her. His words had bruised and stung and left their mark, battering her very spirit and her flesh.

And at the last, that insulting, unforgivable kiss! She wiped the back of her hand hard across her mouth and was startled to discover that she was crying. Tears of sheer rage and helpless fury, she told herself, as she turned and made her way back upstairs. She was thankful to reach her own room without meeting anyone who might have been startled to see her in tears.

It was hours later that Taffy remembered she did not even know the man's name! That was after she had dressed herself in her prettiest frock and, armed with a basket filled with the sort of delicacies sure to appeal to a sick man, had driven out to the hospital.

She knew the name of the man whose decoration she was to have pinned on that morning. A cool-eyed, pleasant nurse whose white uniform wore on its collar the single gold bar that denoted her rank, agreed that she might see Pfc. Hartley Jones.

Taffy was not sufficiently experienced with hospitals and invalids to know that there was a good reason for that screen drawn about the bed. She only knew that the white, gaunt face lit by two

burning dark eyes that was turned to her as she came around the screen was the most touching she had ever seen.

The man lay tense, staring at her, wide-eyed, incredulous. Taffy stood still, burdened with her armful of flowers and the basket of delicacies. She was uncertain, wondering what to say, ill at ease because she knew so little about sick people.

And then Pfc. Hartley Jones relaxed a little.

"Aw, it's only another one of them mirages," he muttered. "I keep imaginin' things."

"I've brought you some flowers," Taffy said hesitantly, laying them in a great sheaf on the bed. "And some fruit and things. And I'm terribly sorry I couldn't get here this morning."

His hand, moving to touch the flowers, touched hers. The man started, and his eyes widened and his hand, fever-hot and so thin it was little more than a claw, closed hard on hers.

"My gosh—you're *real*!" he said, under his breath. "You *are* here!"

"Well, of course," answered Taffy, and put her other hand over his.

The nurse stood unobtrusively at the end of the bed, watching Taffy curiously.

The boy's eyes blazed now and there was a tingle of color in his cheeks. His one hand—her heart twisted when she saw the empty sleeve of his pajama jacket tucked neatly up and pinned with a safety pin over a great heap of bandages about the shoulder—closed hard on her hand. He held it tightly.

"Gee! Think of this! Me here and you with me! Just like I used to dream about, but I never expected it to come true. Not even when they told me this morning that you said you'd come and pin my medal on, I didn't believe it. But then, when you didn't come—well, gee, I felt pretty awful. But this is swell! You—you're so pretty. I didn't know you were—so pretty—"

Taffy felt the tears thick behind her lids. She glanced at the nurse.

"Perhaps he shouldn't be talking so much?" she worried.

THE nurse, out of the range of Pfc. Hartley Jones' eyes, made a tiny gesture. It told Taffy that it didn't matter whether he talked or not. And as

the full impact of that, the realization of the nurse's meaning struck Taffy, she felt as though the blow had been physical.

For a moment she could scarcely get her breath.

"You'll stay a little while?"

There was such a pathetic plea in his voice that Taffy knew he must sense something of the truth. He was a little frightened—he, who had faced death and made it take a backward step. He was terribly alone and a little scared. He wanted her with him.

She sat down beside the bed, covered his hand with her own and smiled at him warmly.

"Of course I'll stay," she said. "As long as you want me to."

He grinned a little at that. "That's taking in a lot of territory, Miss Lansing."

"The name is Taffy," she told him swiftly. "That's what my friends call me."

"I know," he told her eagerly. "I used to read about you. I had your picture with me everywhere I went. I used to pretend to the other fellows that you were my girl. You don't mind?" He asked that hastily.

"Mind?" she told him swiftly and simply. "I'm flattered, Hartley. It was sweet of you."

He lay still then, seemingly content just to hold her hand. Once he smiled up at her, a smile so radiant, so glowing that it lent a fictitious glow of life to his thin, gaunt face.

On a sudden impulse, she bent and kissed him.

He caught his breath and his hand clenched on hers.

"Thanks—gee, *thanks!*" he said huskily after a moment.

She smiled at him and dared not try to answer him lest the threatening tears overwhelm her. And a little later he fell asleep.

The nurse came on cat-silent feet to stand beside her, a finger on his pulse, her eyes on the face of her businesslike wrist-watch.

Then she looked at Taffy.

"You may as well go, Miss Lansing," she whispered, low. "There's nothing more you can do for him. You've made him happier than he ever dared dream he could be. It's—a good exit."

Taffy blinked at her.

"A good exit?" she puzzled. "For me?"

The nurse shook her head and smiled a small, sad smile.

"For him, Miss Lansing," she said quietly. "No man could ask more than to go out on the greatest and most perfect tide of happiness he has ever known. It more than made up for his disappointment this morning."

"I'm so sorry about this morning! I—I didn't understand." Taffy's voice stumbled, then she looked down at the peaceful face of the sleeping man. Her heart gave a little painful lurch, and she looked at the nurse in shocked horror. "You mean he—he's not going to—get well?"

The nurse shook her head and there was a sadness in her dark, tired eyes that said she never grew accustomed to these things, nor could she ever, so long as she lived.

"He hasn't a chance in a million. It's only a matter of hours. He will probably never regain consciousness. You mustn't take it so, Miss Lansing. You've done all you possibly could for him." The nurse changed her tone swiftly as Taffy crumpled. With an arm about her, she guided her out into the corridor. "You run along home now—and don't forget him. Just remember him as a symbol of all the other hundreds of thousands of fine boys who are all over the world fighting like the dickens for both of us!"

"I will," said Taffy, fighting hard for self-control. "I will. And thanks for—for being so—decent to me."

SHE sat in her car for a long while before she could pull herself together enough to risk the drive home. And when she entered the house, it was to find Mimi, her stepmother, in the middle of one of her not unusual fits of temper.

Mimi was only a few years older than Taffy. More years however than Mimi could have been forced to admit under the most painful torture. Still, they were enough of an age to have been the closest of friends—or the most bitter enemies.

Neither was too careful to hide the fact that it was the latter.

Taffy scarcely listened to Mimi's ac-

count of whatever outrage had been perpetrated upon her. It was something to do with a dinner guest who, an hour before dinner, had called to say he was ill and could not come to dinner after all. And it seemed there were to have been a certain number of guests and this one's failure to attend left the table out of balance and Mimi was irate.

"Skip it, Mimi," ordered Taffy wearily. "I'll have dinner in my own room and your table will balance beautifully."

Mimi's eyes gleamed and she studied Taffy uneasily.

"Oh, you mustn't do that," she began a half-hearted protest.

"I'd rather. I have a headache, and I'm not in a party mood."

Taffy brushed past her and went on up the stairs.

MIMI watched her go, and there was a little satisfied look in Mimi's eyes, like that of a hungry kitten faced with a bowl of Grade A cream.

Mimi furiously resented the fact that the Lansing estate was in Taffy's hands; not hers.

That was because the Lansing estate had originally been the Curtis estate. Daphne Curtis had married a charming but utterly worthless man named Lansing and it had all but broken her father's heart. Having no other child, the old man had looked hopefully for his daughter to marry a man worthy of carrying on the manifold businesses of the Curtis plants.

Soon after the marriage he had made a will, leaving the estate to his daughter, in trust for any children she might have. She and her husband were to have only the income. Now Mimi, Taffy's stepmother, was dependent on Taffy for everything except what she herself considered a beggarly income from some stocks. She hated and resented Taffy for this, quite as much as she resented Taffy's fresh, clear beauty and her youth.

But she was too wise to quarrel with Taffy openly.

This, then, was the atmosphere in which Taffy, whose mother had died when she was eight, had grown up. Small wonder, then, if Taffy had grown up with such a feeling self-importance that to some it seemed almost arrogance.



As Taffy entered the lobby she walked straight into Kendall Jackson

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### CHAPTER III

#### IN THE ARMY

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**T**AFFY was having her usual breakfast of orange juice, a sliver of toast and coffee, after an almost sleepless night, when Martha came in, big-eyed and excited.

"He's here again, Miss Taffy—that Mr. Judson."

Taffy looked up from her coffee with a puzzled frown.

"Who is Mr. Judson?"

"That big young man who was here yesterday morning," Martha said eagerly. "Mr. Kendall Judson, he is—and he says he's got to see you."

Taffy put down her cup with a little bang that almost imperiled the delicate china. Oddly enough her hands were shaking a little. But that, of course, was because she had not slept all night, being unable to get Pfc. Hartley Jones out of her mind. Or was it Kendall Judson who had kept her awake?

"Higgins is here today, Miss Taffy," suggested Martha eagerly. "Shall I have him throw Mr. Judson out?"

Taffy grinned wryly, remembering the broad-shouldered, stocky chauffeur with his prize fight record.

"Frankly, Martha, I don't think Higgins could do it!" Taffy admitted. "And if he failed, it would give him an inferiority complex. No, I'll see this Mr. Judson."

She stood up and glanced at her reflection in the mirror. She was dressed for town, smart and trim and lovely in tailored linen and a small brimmed hat.

"So his name is Kendall Judson," she said to herself, as she went down the stairs.

Kendall was waiting for her in the living room, pacing up and down, one hand in his pocket. The other, of course, was in its sling.

He whirled as she came in. For a moment he was silent, looking her over as though the sight of her, cool and fresh and dainty as a pink rosebud, had hit him hard. And then his jaw tightened and his eyes went cold.

"Good morning, Mr. Judson." Taffy spoke first, her tone deliberately cut-

ting. "It can't be possible there is something you overlooked saying to me yesterday?"

"Private Hartley Jones died a little after midnight," Kendall said quietly.

Taffy caught her breath and her hands clenched tightly. She had been more or less prepared for it, for the nurse had been certain. Yet the news hit her like a blow. For a moment she was stone still, then she became conscious of Kendall's eyes upon her, hard and cold and accusing.

"It would have been an awful lot of bother for you to have gone out there and pinned his precious medal on him, of course—but don't you wish a little that you had?" he asked her quietly.

Taffy drew a deep breath. Then he didn't know she had gone to the hospital. Well, she was glad he didn't. He seemed to get such a terrific kick out of disliking and despising her that it would be a shame, she told herself grimly, not to let him go on doing it.

So she shrugged, lowered her head a little, and pretended to be settling her loose, expensive gloves more smartly.

"Oh, well—I can't see how my pinning his medal on would have altered things greatly. After all, he got the medal, didn't he?" She managed to say it without a tremor in her voice.

"You—you little selfish, spoiled, arrogant, good-for-nothing—" he began violently.

That braced her like a dash of cold water in her face. She could be almost airy as she said:

"Really, Mr. Judson, you said all that yesterday. If you haven't any new insults, I'm afraid I'm in rather a hurry. You will excuse me?"

She turned and walked out, leaving him to stand quite still, staring after her with eyes that blazed in his white, set face. . . .

It was mid-afternoon before she returned to the big, square, cream-colored brick home set in the midst of five acres of expensively landscaped grounds that was the Lansing home.

She had a queer little hollow feeling as she parked her car and went up the steps and into the house. She was not sorry for what she had done. She was excited about it. But she was a little scared, too. Because maybe, after all, she wouldn't like being a WAC.



She had been pretty impulsive, rushing out headlong and enrolling in the Woman's Army Corps, just because a dying soldier had held her hand tightly, and had looked as though all the treasures of the world were his just because she had kissed him. But that *was* the reason she had enlisted in the WACS. She was proud of that word "enlisted," because not so long ago it merely had been "enrolled."

"Because," the pleasant, friendly woman in her smart OD uniform behind the desk in the Recruiting Office had explained, "when we started as an auxiliary, we were serving *with* the Army. Now, we are *in* the Army, since the passage of a bill in Congress making us an integral part of the Army. That's why we've dropped the extra 'A.'"

So, Taffy went on with her thoughts, she had enlisted in the WACS. She had taken her mental alertness test, her physical examination. She had filled out her papers, she had answered numerous and wearisome questions. Now she was to await her orders to report to the Training Center. All of this, she told herself firmly, she had done because out in the Pacific, a soldier had pinned her picture up in his tent, or carried it above his heart, and had died happy because she had kissed him.

She had *not* done it because a tall, red-headed, brown-eyed young man had told her she was no earthly good in the world! Kendall Judson had had nothing whatever to do with her decision to join the WACS. She was so definite, so positive, in fact so emphatic about it that at times the very emphasis scared her a little.

It would be a fine thing if she discovered that the stinging epithets Kendall Judson had applied to her had caused her to change her way of living one iota! A fine thing, indeed!

SHE did not tell Mimi what she had done until she received her orders to report to the commandant of the Third Training Center, at Fort Oglethorpe, Ga. She sat looking at the orders for a long moment, and for a moment panic swept her. She was appalled at what she had done.

Her first thought was a comfortable, "Oh, I'll get out of it. I don't have to

go. And if they want to get nasty about it—well, what has the Lansing estate got a fine bunch of lawyers for, if not to get me out of a jam now and then? Even if I *have* joined the Army."

But when the first excitement and panic had vanished, she was ashamed of that thought. Nobody had asked her to enlist in the WACS. It had been her own idea. And unless she was a quitter, as yellow and as soft and worthless as Kendall Judson had called her, she wouldn't even want to get out of it.

"For the duration and six months," she had enlisted! And now the commandant wanted to see her.

When she told Mimi, her stepmother looked at her as though she thought Taffy had lost her mind completely.

"You've done what?" she gasped.

"Joined the WACS," answered Taffy succinctly. "I have to report to the commandant Tuesday morning, so I'm going to get started packing. I'm not just sure what I'll need, but I'll have Martha pack a couple of bags and after I get up there and see what I need, you can pack a trunk and send it along. Perhaps a couple of trunks."

MIMI blinked at her in complete astonishment.

"Taffy, I haven't an earthly idea what you're talking about," she protested. "Where are you going? And why? And for how long?"

"Where? Fort Oglethorpe, in north Georgia, to learn how to be a lady soldier—or should I say a soldier lady? And for how long? For the duration—and six months after for good measure."

Taffy spoke crisply, and felt her spirits rise just a little. Because it *was* an adventure, and if other girls could give all their time to their country for the duration, she guessed she could too. If the WACS had been still an auxiliary, of course she could have resigned if she grew bored. But now . . . Well, she was in the Army now.

Mimi was staring at her, open-mouthed, completely amazed and incredulous.

"Taffy!" she bleated wildly. "You'll never stand it! Why, Taffy, I've seen movies—news reels and things. They *work*—and—and drill. March for hours and hours. Taffy, you're crazy!"

If Taffy had needed anything **at all**

to stiffen her determination it was the hint of opposition in Mimi's voice.

"So you think I'm soft and yellow and lazy and worthless, too, do you?" she flashed out hotly, to Mimi's stupefaction. "Well I'll show you! I'll show you *both* that I can take it!"

But Mimi was not too stupefied to catch that little betraying word, and her eyes flashed.

"Both, Taffy?" she cried. "Then you are up to something!"

But Taffy had turned and walked, almost ran, out of the room. Mimi stared after her for a long moment, then suddenly Mimi's plump, round face was touched by a mischievous smile. She flung her dimpled arms wide in a little gesture that spoke of her joy at the thought of having the house all to herself for awhile—of being undisputed mistress of all she beheld.

## CHAPTER IV

### "THEY WON'T WANT YOU"

AMAZED incredulity such as Mimi displayed, was the reaction of Taffy's special "gang" when they heard the news.

Girls who had been debutantes with Taffy, and who had been members of the gang since high school days had dropped out since Pearl Harbor. Some had gone into munitions and plane plants. Two or three were in the Nurses Training School. Two others had become WAVES. But Taffy was the first of this small, select—by their own standards, anyway—group to join the WACS. And so they regarded her with a slight uneasiness.

"Taffy, darling, you aren't going to like it!" protested baby-faced, big-eyed Jean Stevens. "Uniforms—and marching miles. Doing all sorts of dull and boring jobs! Taffy, you'll be *sick*!"

"I don't know," drawled one of the men. "I think Taffy can take it. She's not a bad egg."

Quite frankly he had been so pleased when his draft board turned him down that he had thrown a regular beano of a party to celebrate.

They were dining and dancing at the

town's best hotel and Taffy was halfway around the dance floor in Bill Powers' arms when she saw Kendall Judson watching her. She looked swiftly away, and trod heavily on Bill's toe.

"Ouch!" Bill said. "For Pete's sake, you're not wearing Army boots yet, my love. What's the matter with the pedal extremities?"

"Sorry, Bill," Taffy apologized, and out of the corner of her eye she saw Kendall Judson approaching with a purposeful glint in his eye. "Don't let this creature cut in," she ordered Bill in a swift aside just as Kendall reached them.

"Hello." Kendall greeted Taffy as though they had been the best possible friends. And then to Bill, he said carelessly, "Mind if I cut in, old man?"

"As a matter of fact, I do," Bill said stiffly.

Kendall stared at him.

"Don't be stuffy, Bill," Taffy heard herself saying carelessly.

And as Bill's jaw dropped, she slid out of his arms and into Kendall's, and knew she was being a double-starred fool. For she hated this man with all her heart. That was the reason her heart always went into a war-dance complete with tom-toms every time she saw him, of course. There was surely no reason on earth why she should tolerate his presence. Instead, she was practically welcoming it.

"And so you've joined the WACS!" said Kendall, as their steps matched and they slid smoothly into the groove.

Taffy looked up at him sharply.

"How did you know?" she demanded.

Kendall grinned wryly.

"Oh, I get around," he assured her. "And you're 'copy' for the newspapers. They're laying bets around town that you don't get past the processing station."

"Processing station?" she repeated blankly.

He grinned down at her wryly.

"Never heard of it?" He obviously was not surprised at her ignorance. "That's where cute fluffy little light-weights like you are changed into fighting WACS."

"And how are you betting on my chances of getting past the processing station?" she asked, when she had mastered her fury sufficiently to be able to

speak without a betraying quiver in her voice.

"Oh, I never bet on a sure thing," he assured her.

Her heart gave a tiny startled lurch.

"Then you *do* think I can make the grade." She was surprised to realize how pleased she was at that.

"I am so sure that you can't make it," he answered her flatly.

RED rage seethed within her for a moment before she could control the almost irresistible impulse to turn fish-wise and smack him hard.

"But even the effort to get into the WACS will do you a world of good," he went on with that infuriating calm, while she still struggled to hold her angry tongue. "Though of course you know you are going to get your pretty little ears pinned back, don't you?"

"Am I?" she managed through set teeth.

"Of course. But I think probably that may be one of the reasons why you're such a spoiled, selfish little brat. You haven't had your ears pinned back far enough or often enough."

Taffy came to a halt at the edge of the dance floor and slid out of the curve of his arm. Her eyes were blazing forked lightning and she was quivering a little with rage and helpless fury.

"I really can't see any reason why you should bother with me any more," she told him icily. "It's obvious you've used up all your insults, and have had to start repeating yourself. It seems kind of silly for us to keep on seeing each other, don't you think? In the future, suppose you just keep the blazes out of my way, will you?"

She turned and walked away, head high, her body held stiff to keep it from trembling. Such rage was in her heart it made her half-blind with shooting sparks as she walked back to her table.

Bill stood up and came to meet her. His eyes were dark with anger.

"What's the big idea of telling me to pass the guy up, when he wants to dance with you," he demanded, "then making me look like a fool by going off with him?"

"I want to go home," she told Bill, ignoring his protest.

"And that's not a bad idea, at all," Bill answered her grimly.

Her car was parked in the lot outside and as they reached it, she slid beneath the wheel.

"There's no need of your seeing me home," she said carelessly. "It's early and the party's just getting good. I've got a headache, and some packing to do. So let's make this good-bye. Shall we?"

Bill hesitated.

"Are you on the level with this cock-eyed Army business?" he demanded grimly.

She looked at him coolly, remembering that Bill had pulled all manner of strings to get himself deferred when it had seemed the draft board was moving in on him. She remembered Bill's acute relief when he had been declared essential to the firm of manufacturing chemists that employed him, and his utter frankness in admitting that relief and delight.

Somehow, she found she didn't really like Bill, after all. And that was pretty crazy because up to the time Kendall

[Turn page]

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## *"I Won't Wear Your Ring! I Won't Marry You!"*



GINNY FAIRLY SCREAMED the words at Colin, who wasn't accustomed to being denied anything. She had to admit to herself he would make a wonderful match. But Ginny's heart just couldn't respond. And when love did come to her, it came accompanied by the roar and clatter of war plant machines in KISS ME AGAIN—PLEASE, one of Mona Farnsworth's most appealing stories!

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE

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Judson—and Pfc. Hartley Jones—had come into her life she had been rather sure in her mind that she was going to marry Bill eventually.

"Well?" Bill's curt voice interrupted her thoughts.

"Yes, Bill, I'm on the level about it," she told him quietly. "I have a funny feeling that maybe—well, just *maybe* I'll make a good soldier."

"Poppycock and stuff!" snapped Bill crossly. "You a soldier? Look, Angel-face, this is war, you know—not a comic opera."

Wide-eyed, Taffy stared at him.

"Well, fancy *you* realizing that!" she marveled, and drove away before he could recover from the sting of her words.

When she reached home, she left the car in the drive, taking it for granted that some one of the servants would garage it for her. She went into the house, and heard the soft murmur of voices in the small living room beyond the library, from which came a mellow apricot-shaded light.

Her lips curled a little. Mimi was obviously entertaining some chosen beau. For a moment Taffy hesitated. Should she go in and make Mimi angry? It seemed rather a childish thing to do, so she went on upstairs to her own rooms.

THE small mountain of luggage in the dressing room, all ready to go down to the taxi in the morning, hit her like a blow. It made her departure seem so imminent. Up to this moment she hadn't really felt that she was leaving—for the duration, and six months." The thought made her uneasy and ill at ease.

And then she remembered Kendall Judson's face, his eyes that laughed and derided her, his calm, frank, insolent assurance that she was too soft, too yellow for the WACS. He seemed to feel quite sure the WACS wouldn't want her. Her teeth set with a little click.

She would show him, she vowed furiously. She would show him, and all the others around town who were betting that she couldn't make the grade! Why, the WACS would be tickled to death to have her! She—she—well, she would make them glad to have her! Nobody had ever yet failed to welcome the pres-

ence of Miss Daphne Lansing, the celebrated beauty and heiress to the enormous Lansing estate.

She blushed at the thought. We-e-ll, not a celebrated beauty, of course. She was being an idiot. But at least people had not seemed to mind looking at her. And she had enough self-assurance to feel sure that she could make herself welcome, even in an outfit of which Kendall Judson obviously had such a high opinion!

She waved her hand at the heap of luggage and touched her fingers to her temple in a little mock salute.

"Okay, WACS, here I come," she said aloud. . . .

Despite Martha's efforts, Taffy overslept and in the morning when she was ready to leave, her train had gone. She shrugged carelessly, ordered her luggage stowed in her convertible and got in.

Mimi was not yet awake and Taffy didn't bother to wake her to say good-by. Only Martha and Higgins saw her off, and only Martha seemed to feel it was an occasion for tears. But Martha had known Taffy all her life, had been her mother's maid and her own nurse in childhood, so Martha was really the only person in the house toward whom Taffy felt warmly.

Impulsively, she embraced Martha, kissed her cheek.

"Don't cry, Martha," she said. "They won't let me carry a gun and go into battle. I'll do my battling here at home and probably my most serious injury will be a blistered heel from too much marching."

Martha sniffed and smiled damply. "I'm sure I hope so, Miss Taffy. If you need me, just let me know and I'll come right away. You never sewed a button on in your life, and soldier's uniforms have an awful lot of buttons."

Taffy laughed. "Somehow, I don't seem to remember that WACS are allowed to bring their maids to camp. But if they are, I'll send for you."

And then she was off, turning her head at the end of the drive to wave to them, before the car entered the highway and straightened out toward the rim of misty-blue mountains north. There lay the Third WAC Training Center—and a brand new life for Taffy Lansing.

At the back of her mind, comforting her in moments of panic, and keeping her from being too uncomfortable, was the unacknowledged thought that her impulsive gesture was the only one she could have made. Partly, she was honest enough this morning to admit, because of the unforgivable things Kendall Judson had said to her. Partly because of Pfc. Hartley Jones, and the hour or more she had spent beside his bed in the hospital.

Anyway, it was an adventure and she was in for it and she was going to enjoy it—if she could. And if she couldn't—well, there might be some way the specialized and expensive firm of attorneys representing the Lansing estate could get busy and get her out of it. Even if she was in the Army.

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## CHAPTER V

### TRAINING CENTER

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IT WAS a glorious May morning. The world's face had been washed by a brisk rain last night, and polished this morning by a sweeping wind. Taffy felt gloriously free and alive. She sang a little as she drove, whipping through small towns and villages with a speed and a carelessness that made townspeople leap for their lives, then glare furiously after her when she had passed.

She entered the area marked by stone and bronze markers depicting the Battle of Chickamauga and, interested, paused now and then to read one of the markers. She tried to conjure up a picture of the battle, one of the most decisive of the War Between the States. She felt as though Scarlett O'Hara and Rhett Butler should be somewhere around, and grinned at the thought.

She came at last to the fort. Clean and bright and shining in the noonday sunlight. Neat white graveled paths stretching in every direction. Soldiers and soldiers and more soldiers. Girls in khaki—WACS, she told herself, startled, and eyed them sharply.

They came in groups, laughing, chatting, looking smart and trim in their neat uniforms, their snappy caps. She saw them salute smartly, when they en-

countered officers, either men or women. She saw a few nurses in their white uniforms, with their blue capes swung over their shoulders. But she decided that there must be hundreds of the WACS and they, of course, interested her most of all.

A whistle blew shrilly. The traffic light turned green and she swung her car into line behind an olive-drab painted car in which sat two middle-aged, rather impressive-looking officers, with a trim, smartly uniformed WAC at the wheel. The olive-drab car turned left through the entrance gates, with Taffy in her cream-colored convertible right behind it.

Suddenly a whistle shrilled again. She heard a yell and a voice calling: "Hey, you—in the white car!" Then a soldier leaped on her running board and said sternly, "Pull over to the side. Where the dickens do you think you're going?"

The olive-drab car had vanished down a company street, bordered on either side by mellow old two-storied brick houses. Obviously they were officers' quarters, and equally obviously dated from World War I, in sharp contrast to white-painted barracks and new buildings that seemed to have sprouted like mushrooms all over the place.

Taffy looked sharply at the soldier on the running board. He was not quite six feet tall, broad-shouldered, and as brown as his uniform. He was looking at her with eyes that were dark and stern.

"Where am I going?" she answered him curtly. "To the Commandant, of course."

The soldier looked slightly uncertain. "Oh—you're related to him, maybe?" he suggested.

She laughed. "Goodness, no! I'm going to be a WAC. My orders were to report to the Commandant and I thought that car ahead would lead me there."

The soldier relaxed a little. He even grinned, his white teeth flashing in the smooth brown of his good-looking face.

"Oh, so you're going to be a WAC, and you're bargaining right up to the Commandant's quarters to tell him all about it! Sister, are you in for a shoving around!"

He said it almost under his breath,

and there was even a tinge of pity in his tone. Then he became brisk and businesslike.

"You should have come in on the train with the rest of the crowd from your recruiting area, and you would have been met by a bus and plenty of instructions. However, since you are here, you might as well go on down to the reception center. I'll show you."

HE SLID into the car beside her, and she backed, turned and drove back along the road she had come. There, a neat stone marker in a fork of two unpaved roads said:

### THIRD WAC TRAINING CENTER

She turned her car and drove down a tree-shaded road, shining white in the sun. The soldier directed her to a parking space, where there was room for half a dozen cars. Above the civilian parking spaces, she saw others marked, "Reserved for Lt. McLendon," "Reserved for Captain Hovey," "Reserved for Lieut. Barton," and so on.

Beyond the parking area, there was a company street, bordered on either side by row after row of neat, freshly painted white barrackslike buildings. There was a small guardhouse at one end of the street, and here stood two women, in trim khaki twill skirts and blouses, and smart brimmed caps. Each wore on her arm a band marked "MP."

The soldier gestured toward the two MPs and said:

"Okay, sister, you're on your own from now. They'll tell you where to go and what to do."

Taffy hesitated. "I—er—pulled a boner in driving to the Commandant's quarters?"

The soldier grinned. "I'm afraid so—if you'd really reached his quarters. But there wasn't a chance. You didn't have a pass."

"Thanks for not letting me make a complete fool of myself," Taffy said.

"You're welcome," answered the soldier and got out of the car. "The name is Jerry Marlowe—private first class. If there's any little thing I can do . . . But I'll be seeing you around. The PX here serves the best root beer on the reservation. No man's lunch would be complete without one. You'll be there—so will I."

He saluted her smartly, grinned again, and went off.

Taffy drew a deep breath, slid out of the car, and walked across to the gate where the two MPs stood.

"I'd like to see the Commandant," she said quietly.

"Your business?" asked one MP briskly—the small, plump, curly-haired one with that friendly smile. "Your pass?"

Taffy presented her papers and the MP looked startled.

"Oh, but you should have come in with the regular crowd from town, to the Reception Center," she protested.

"I missed the train, so I drove myself up," answered Taffy, and indicated the cream-colored convertible.

The MP looked even more startled.

"I'll get someone to show you to the Reception Center, while you get your bag," she said.

Taffy thanked her and went back to the car. She was struggling to remove the bags, stowed neatly in the rumble in Higgins' inimitable way, when a girl in the WAC uniform came to her and smiled.

"May I help you?" she said. "I understand you're looking for the Reception Center."

"Thanks. Right now, I'm trying to get these bags out and they don't seem to want to come." Taffy was getting hot and flushed at her unaccustomed task.

The WAC—she was not an officer, as was indicated by the fact that she wore no bars on her collar—looked startled.

"Heavenly days!" she gasped. "What are you planning to do with all that stuff? And the car?"

Taffy looked at her.

"But these are my clothes—personal possessions. My trunks will be along later."

"Look!" The WAC took pity on her. "You're in the Army now. You'll wear a uniform that will be furnished you. Hereafter, you will have to carry your own bag wherever you go, so you soon learn to make it light. Select one of those, lock the rumble, leave the car here. Later, you can arrange to have someone drive it home for you. You can't keep it on the post, you know."

Taffy listened, drew a long hard breath, set her teeth, and nodded.



At random, she picked up the smart pigskin bag that was closest to her, snapped the lid on the luggage compartment and locked it. Carrying her own bag for the first time in her life, Taffy walked beside the trim-looking WAC along the company street.

She was wide-eyed, taking in everything. Nor did she miss—it was, afterward, to be her clearest and most vivid impression of her first days in the WAC Training Center—the fact that when a girl saluted an officer, she did it with snap and a pleasant, friendly smile. And each salute was returned, with a smile. Before Taffy had traversed the length of the company street, she decided she had seen more pleasant, friendly smiles here than she could remember seeing back in town in months.

She saw girls her own age, in uniform. But she also saw, which surprised and impressed her, women much older. There were plenty of neat gray curls tucked beneath the smooth-fitting backs and deep brims of the WAC caps.

Some of the women were in the khaki twill skirts and blouses; some in dark green cover-alls. A great many wore green-and-white striped seersucker dresses—simple button-front dresses, quite short, and some of the unbuttoned skirts revealed matching shorts. Girls who wore these dresses, wore brimmed canvas hats, turned down in front and up in back.

There were girls and women in white uniforms and caps that marked them—as she would find later—as members of the Bakers and Cooks School, an important part of the WAC Training Center.

They came at last to a small building that seemed to Taffy to be simply boiling over with girls in civilian clothes. Trim, smart suits; rather limp, shabby dresses; hats that were crazy enough to be smart; hats that were merely utilitarian. And in the midst of the girls, several uniformed WACS.

Eventually the girls were herded together, each carrying her own suitcase, and marched down a company street, to a barracks. There they were assigned to beds.

Taffy looked about her in shocked dismay. The barracks was just that—long and narrow and high-ceilinged. Down either side was a double row of bunks, uppers and lowers. At the foot

of each were lockers. Between the bunks were open-fronted closets capable of holding several garments.

Taffy stood beside the bunk assigned to her and put down her suitcase. The bunk next to hers had been assigned to a small, plump, pert-looking girl with too much rouge and too dark lipstick and a permanent wave that had left her black hair fuzzy rather than curly. She wore a dark blue dress that was too short and fitted her too closely. On the back of her head was perched a violently red hat, and a matching red patent leather purse was tucked under one arm.

She grinned at Taffy and jerked a thumb toward her bunk.

"Of course," she said, "it's not exactly the Ritz-Carlton. But what would I be knowing about the Ritz-Carlton? It's better than what I've been used to these last few months. My name's Thelma Borge."

"How do you do?" said Taffy, and could not keep the frost from her voice.

Thelma looked at her sharply.

"Oh-ho, the Duchess herself!" she said frankly. "I didn't recognize you at first."

She turned a plump shoulder and went briskly to work unpacking her bag, stowing its contents either in the locker at the foot of the bed, or hanging things away in the open closet.

ALL about her, Taffy saw other girls doing the same thing. All chattering away, friendly and excited, sounding like a lot of blackbirds with their cheerful chirping.

She turned stiffly to follow their lead—and in her heart burned a hatred for Kendall Judson so fierce and so hot that it put strength into her back and fury into her movements. Because if Kendall Judson had kept out of her life, she wouldn't have been here, where now she certainly had no desire to be and where she was quite sure she would be of no service whatever.

She hated him so fiercely that she could swallow the lump of homesickness that surged up into her throat. So strong was her hatred that she didn't even notice when Thelma Borge and some of the other girls watched curiously as she stowed delicate, hand-made lingerie, apple-blossom tinted and deli-

cately scented, in the locker, and hung in the closet a negligee of peach-colored satin and creamy lace.

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## CHAPTER VI

### GETTING ACQUAINTED

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**D**URING the next few days, Taffy Lansing learned a great many things. She learned to salute snappily, smile pleasantly and say "Yes, ma'am" when a WAC officer called "Lansing!" Or if it was an Army officer, the salute was just as snappy, the smile just as pleasant, but the answer, of course, was "Yes, sir."

Occasionally, a trainee said "Yes, sir" to a WAC and "Yes, ma'am" to an Army officer, but nobody seemed to think that anything but an excusable accident.

Taffy learned to wear a uniform, tailored trimly so that it fit quite as well as the most expensive frock she had ever owned.

She learned to march a bit; that, of course, would take a lot of time. But her squad, according to their sergeant, wasn't bad at all. She learned to line up—the Army term for it, she learned, was "sweating it out"—for everything from inspection in the morning, to bed check at night.

She "sweated it out" with a mess tray in a cafeteria line for breakfast, dinner and supper. She "sweated it out," it sometimes seemed, from early morning until dark, when she slid her weary body into her bunk and knew the blessedness of completely exhausted slumber.

She learned to be awakened in the morning at an hour when ordinarily—in the life that now seemed a million miles away—she had been just getting home from a good party. She drilled; she went to lectures, sitting on a sort of green-painted grandstand out in the woods where, if ever, lessons could be a pleasure.

Only one thing she did not learn in those first few days that became a week and then two weeks and then three. She did not learn to like any part of what she was doing. That first night, after bed check when lights had gone out and

all through the big room, in forty-four bunks, forty-four tired and excited girls were settling down to sleep, she had had an almost uncontrollable temptation to get up, dress and get out of there. To drive her cherished cream-colored convertible back to town and to her luxurious rooms in her beautiful home and her old, beloved life.

The only thing that had kept her from trying to do just that, and letting the Army do its worst, was the memory of Kendall Judson's face when he had said, "They're laying bets around town that you won't get past the processing station."

Well, she *had* got past the processing station. She had received her uniforms and equipment. Higgins had come up to drive the convertible back to town and had looked at her in her trim, smart, becoming uniform in admiration and respect. Her taffy-colored curls were in a soft roll across the back of her neck, safely above the line of her collar, meeting the edge of her cap, in the accepted "G.I. manner."

She had almost wept with homesickness on Higgins' broad shoulder. But she had remembered Kendall Judson just in time and so, instead, she had given Higgins a handsome salute, a gay smile and a blithe good-by.

She had not made friends. The girls had been pleasant enough, but it was up to her to make the first move toward friendship, and she hadn't done it. Quick friendships had sprung up among the other girls. The trainees were like college freshmen, with the sophomores and seniors and juniors being pleasant and friendly and helpful. But every girl was on her own, and it was up to her whether she was one of a friendly group or left to herself.

One afternoon, during the regular ten-minute break between lectures, Taffy was one of a group of ten or twelve girls who had dropped down on the pine-needle strewn ground to smoke and rest, before going on to the next lecture or job.

**T**HELMA BERGE, the girl who had introduced herself to Taffy that first day, lit a cigarette and inhaled deeply.

"Well, I joined this man's Army for just one thing," she said cheerfully, "and I think I'm going to get it."

"A commission?" asked somebody, with lazy amusement.

"Heck, no—a husband!" answered Thelma, as cheerfully.

"A husband?" There was a little startled chorus.

"Well, certainly." Thelma was surprised at their astonishment. "I have always wanted to get married and have a raft of babies. So when the war came along and Uncle Sam began scooping up all the fellows a girl would want to marry, and dropping them into Army camps, I did what any smart hunter would do. I went where the game was! And here I am!"

She looked around the little group, defiant now as she caught the look in their eyes.

"Okay," she said shortly. "You know why I'm here. Suppose somebody else spills the truth about why she's here! You, for instance, Lansing. What made you join up?"

Taffy lifted her pretty chin and her eyes were cold.

"A desire to be of service to my country," she answered curtly.

"Well, *certainly*," Thelma seemed to think that rather silly. "That's like saying 'I breathe because I want to go on living.' That's the basic reason we're all here. But wasn't there something else, some other reason?"

"Should there have been?" Taffy's eyebrows went up.

"How about you, Evans?"

Thelma turned a plump shoulder on Taffy and addressed another girl. A tall, slender blond girl whose thin face had filled out a lot in her days here.

"I joined up because I was lonely—and frightened," Evans said quietly. "I'm an orphan. I've been on my own since I was fourteen. I'm twenty-two now. Last winter a friend of mine who worked in the same place with me, and who earned the same salary was ill—terribly ill. She was in the hospital for months and . . . Well, when she came out, she was too weak to hold her job and she had no money. It frightened me. I thought that if I went to work for Uncle Sam, I'd have friendship, I'd have room and board and clothes and medical attention when I needed it—and in return I'd give *him* my very best service."

Thelma nodded. "Now we're getting

some place. How about you, Parsons? Why did you join?"

Parsons was a stunning-looking girl with dark hair and eyes, who smiled now and said lightly:

"I was a successful career gal—but I couldn't take it. I was working like crazy to keep at the top of the ladder. It had taken me a long time to get there, but I knew that if I dared close my eyes for a second to rest, I'd be lost. The competition in my field was terrific. I'm a dress designer and I was head of the department in one of the swankiest Fifth Avenue shops. But my assistant wanted my job. The whole thing was a nightmare—and I all but cracked up under the strain. So I said, 'What the heck? If we lose this war, there won't be a spot for a dress designer. Maybe I could help a little bit to win it.' So I joined up—and I've been sleeping soundly and eating normally and having myself a whale of a time in general ever since."

"Good girl!" Thelma applauded her frankness. "How about you, Lansing? Want to break down and confess the other reason you became a WAC?"

Taffy looked around the circle and suddenly she grinned impishly, as she had not grinned since she had arrived. Her eyes were blue and warm, and there was a little trill of laughter in her voice when she answered:

"The second reason I joined was because—there was a man who thought I couldn't make the grade!"

The others laughed in swift understanding and there was a little feeling of warmth and friendliness that had not been there before.

A GIRL who had been sitting quietly at one side of the group, saying nothing, said suddenly:

"I joined the WACS because—my husband was taken prisoner by the Japs at Bataan."

There was a moment of dead silence during which the girl got up and walked away.

Thelma broke that silence after a moment.

"People always did say I talked too much," she said grimly and got to her feet.

The others followed her silently, but after that ten-minute break Taffy found

that she felt a little more at home with the other girls in her squad. A little of that tight, uncomfortable feeling about her heart had gone.

After lunch that day Thelma said briskly: "Hi, Lansing, how's for coming over to the PX for a soda?"

Taffy stared at her.

"After eating an enormous meal like that," she protested, "you want something more?"

Thelma grinned crookedly.

"Sure—but not food," she answered gleefully. "Don't you know about the after-lunch session at the PX? Heavens, gal, you ain't really a WAC, after all! Come on—time's a-wastin'."

Thelma led the way briskly down the company street and up the steps of a building that looked like most of the other buildings on the reservation. But there was a terrific noise emanating from this one. There was the sound of a great many voices, a great deal of laughter, both masculine and feminine.

Thelma went up the steps, briskly shoving a path for herself and Taffy through a great mass of men and women all in khaki. Soldiers and WACS.

Inside, the post exchange was long and narrow, and down one side there was a counter with stools before it. Scattered down the center were benches and tables. At the other side were shelves of magazines, of cosmetics and various toiletries and the like.

One end of the PX was taken up by the beauty shop and a few operators in their crisp white uniforms were scattered about the room. But mostly there were soldiers and WACS. And a terrific barrage of sounds and an atmosphere of fun and frolic.

Before Thelma and Taffy had penetrated to the center of the room a tall soldier paused in front of Taffy and eyed her sharply.

"Well, at last!" he said in a delighted tone. "It's the little G.I. Glamour Puss!"

Taffy looked up at him, startled. For a moment she could not place him, and he looked hurt.

"You don't remember me?" he said. "And after I saved you from probably being court-martialed or something—rushing up to the commandant with your cute little induction papers and everything. The name is Marlowe—remember?"

Taffy laughed. "Oh, yes, I remember. And you were going to stand by in case I needed help—remember?"

Jerry Marlowe grinned down at her anxiously. "But you haven't needed help?"

"So far there's been nothing I couldn't cope with," she admitted.

"And she's a great little coper, if you ask me," Thelma observed, eyeing Jerry with frank interest and approval.

"Oh, I'm sorry. Private Marlowe, Thelma—Miss Borge, Private Marlowe."

"Where do you get that 'Miss' stuff, baby? You're in the Army now, and 'Miss' is not G.I. It's Private Borge, Private Marlowe. Hiya, Jerry?" Thelma competently took charge of the situation.

"Swell, Thelma . . . Hi, wait a minute. Where's Dave?" Jerry raised himself to his full and impressive height, and scanned the crowded room.

"Who's Dave?" demanded Thelma.

"My buddy—a swell guy from tonsils to boot-laces," answered Jerry, and suddenly let out a war-whoop that made everybody in the room jump. "Hi, Dave! Over this way, son!"

Taffy heard somebody laugh and say: "Oh, it's Marlowe. The cowpoke yelling for his maverick partner again."

THE boy called Dave—a head shorter than Jerry, his worried eyes peering through thick-lensed glasses, his nondescript brown hair sleek and fitting his head closely—managed to reach them.

"Thelma, Taffy—meet Dave," Jerry said proudly. "Dave, meet the gals."

"I'd be pleased to," said Dave earnestly, and Thelma eyed him curiously.

By some miracle there were four places vacant at a center table and Jerry and Dave and the girls managed to reach them, before anyone else saw them.

"What's a cowpoke?" Taffy asked curiously.

Jerry looked at her sharply.

"You don't savvy Western lingo?" he demanded. "Haven't you ever seen Gene Autry in the movies?"

Taffy laughed. "Of course."

"Well, I don't plunk a guitar nor spend all my time rescuing damsels in distress or chasing cattle rustlers," Jerry told her briskly, "but in peace—"

times, I ride the range. I'm a cowhand on a ranch in Arizona. Now let's talk about you. What happened to that classy cream-colored job you arrived in? I've been worried about it."

"My chauffeur came and got it," answered Taffy and blushed. "I was an awful fool when I first got here, wasn't I?"

"Oh, I don't know. This was all news to you. How could you be expected to know that you couldn't wear your hair long and paint your fingernails red and sleep late in the morning?" Jerry was quite reasonable about it. "You were cute as a bug's ear that morning. I've dreamed about you several times since then."

"It's a nice line," said Taffy demurely. Jerry was hurt.

"What's an ignorant cowpoke know about lines—except the ones that he uses on the cattle?" he protested. "I'm as honest as the day is long and I don't know how to flirt."

"Being stationed at a fort where there are five thousand WACS should have enlightened your ignorance a whole lot," Taffy pointed out.

A girl, passing the table, paused.

"Hello, Jerry!" she said, almost too eagerly.

Jerry sprang to his feet with every evidence of being delighted.

"Lois!" he cried. "Gee, this is swell!"

Taffy looked curiously at a small, dark-haired, dark-eyed girl whose trimly-fitted uniform was kind to her dainty figure and whose sleeve was ornamented by two stripes that Taffy already knew marked the girl as a WAC corporal.

"Do you know the girls here?" Jerry asked her.

Lois smiled. "Hello, Lansing—Hello, Borge," she said.

"Hiya?" Thelma greeted her coolly, and her manner all but put a protective arm about Dave and said "Hands off—he's mine."

"Have a soda, Lois?" demanded Jerry.

"Thanks, no," said Lois. "I'm going on duty almost immediately." But Lois lingered for a moment and Taffy said to herself, "She's in love with him."

"Tennis?" Jerry said. "About four?"

"Love it!" Lois said quickly. "See you then!"

With a little nod at Taffy and Thelma she went briskly away.

Jerry sat down and turned to Taffy.

"Now, let's see—where were we?"

"You were dreaming about me," Taffy told him demurely.

"Could be pleasant dreaming!" Jerry grinned at her. "There's a dance at the Service Club. How'd it be if we tried to find out whether I've still got two left feet?"

"Sure you won't be too tired—after tennis?" drawled Taffy teasingly.

Jerry grinned at her. "Tomorrow's my day off—I can rest up by going in town and propping up a lamp post!" he assured her and seemed to accept it as a date.

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## CHAPTER VII

### THE CAVEMAN APPROACH

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JUST two days later, Taffy received a telegram from one of the executives of the company that paid the largest share of her income, and went to the company sergeant with it. In due time, she arrived at the proper office, asked for and was granted three days' leave to go home and attend to business.

It was funny, she told herself, packing her bag. She wasn't a bit excited over the prospect of going home. She had grown so accustomed to the routine here. She straightened and stared into space and realized, with a little shock, that she *liked* it here! She thought that was pretty absurd, until she thought it over. Then she had to realize that it was the truth.

Life here was brisk and forthright and there was a real purpose to it. Once she had been infuriated at the routine. She had loathed being awakened at an hour in the morning when she had formerly been just settling down to sleep. She had hated standing in line, being marched to every single duty of the day—the girls called it being "hutted." That was because of the sergeant's authoritative voice shouting, "*Hut*—two, three," as the squad swung into step. The word had puzzled Taffy at first. Now she used it as casually as any girl in her company.

But now she was leaving the camp for three days, she found a queer reluctance to depart. She tried to laugh at herself and say, "You silly thing! For three days—back home where things are *fun*, and you can sleep until noon if you want to. And be called 'Taffy' or 'Miss Lansing,' and not have to salute every other minute, and smile, and say 'Yes, Ma'am,' no matter how you really feel about it!"

At the very back of her mind there was the thought which she refused to acknowledge—the thought that back in town she would be pretty certain to meet Kendall Judson again. Her shoulders squared themselves a little beneath the trimly-fitted uniform, and her head, with its becoming cap correctly placed above her blue eyes, lifted a little.

She took the bus back home. It was packed almost to suffocation by WACS, soldiers, sailors and a few civilians. Inevitably there were songs. Taffy had discovered that when servicemen and servicewomen get together on anything that moves on wheels, there is singing. She joined in heartily, and a tall, good-looking young blond sailor, fresh and scrubbed-looking in his summer whites, sat beside her and looked at her appreciatively.

"Look, Pretty Thing," he said, "how's about you and me seeing the town when we get back to the old burg?"

Taffy laughed. "I was born and brought up in that town and I'm going home on business and I'll probably be busy every minute."

The sailor bristled indignantly.

"Oh, so you don't like sailors," he protested. "Is that it?"

Taffy laughed. "I like anybody who wears a uniform. Why not? Aren't we all Service people together? So long as we fight together, what difference does it make who wears what uniform? But I honestly am going to be busy. I'm sorry."

The sailor nodded, without rancor, and removed himself to another seat where a pretty WAC sat talking to another. And the sailor leaned on the back of the seat before them, adjusting his tall, lithe body to the swaying of the bus and began a conversation with them.

Taffy smiled. "Sweating out a date," the gang back at camp would have

called the sailor's behavior. Taffy grinned a trifle wryly.

"It's not a pretty expression," she told herself, "and I don't particularly like it. But after all, it's G.I. The Army started it, I didn't!"

WHEN she reached the bus station, she looked about but there was no sign of Higgins. She managed to find a taxi, stow her bag in it, and relax on the cushions.

It seemed a pleasant thrill to be riding through the familiar, beloved city in its early morning rush and hustle of business. She reveled in it. After all, it was her town and she loved it.

The Lansing estate owned two of those big office buildings and that good hotel on the corner. She laughed a little. She and this town were so woven together that she couldn't possibly have gone away and left it permanently.

Barton, the butler, was flustered and excited at sight of her, arriving in a taxi.

"But, Miss Taffy, Higgins met the train! You must have missed him."

He caught her bag from her as though shocked that she should be carrying it.

"I came on the bus, Barton," she answered him lightly and Barton looked even more shocked. "Where is Mrs. Lansing?"

"It's only a little after nine, Miss Taffy," Barton reminded her reproachfully and Taffy nodded. She had forgotten that Mimi was never visible before eleven-thirty.

She went to the telephone, called her office and was assured that the executive whom she wished to see would be waiting for her when she came in. The cream-colored convertible was waiting and she got into it with the feeling of slipping into the arms of some dearly beloved friend.

At the estate office, there was a pretty commotion about her—how well she looked in her uniform, and all the rest of it. She was pleased, of course. What normal girl would not have been?

The committee meeting had assembled hastily, and they were waiting for her. The business that had called her to town was tedious and boresome, but she signed the necessary papers and at one o'clock was free.



She declined a luncheon invitation and went out into the street. And as she entered the lobby of the hotel where she had decided to buy herself the fanciest luncheon she could conceive, she walked straight into Kendall Judson.

She saw him first and her heart rose dizzily in her throat, and her knees were suddenly weak, and the palms of her hands went moist. For a moment, she thought to turn and run away from him. But in that moment he saw her. Saw her and stood still with shock. Then he came swiftly toward her, his eyes eager, alight, his good hand stretched out to her.

"Taffy!" He greeted her with obvious delight, his hand closing hard over hers. "Taffy—but this is incredible! This is fantastic! I've worried like the devil about you—but now I see I needn't have. You're looking marvelous. More beautiful than ever!"

"Hello," said Taffy and felt like a fool because her heart was thumping so hard she felt sure he must hear it, and because her color was warm and high.

"You'll have lunch with me, Taffy?" he pleaded.

"I'd like to," she answered him honestly.

He tucked her gloved hand through his arm.

"Look!" he said proudly. "I don't have to carry it in a sling any longer! The splints are off! I'm almost a well man again. I'll be going out again one of these days."

Taffy's heart caught on a little jagged pain.

"Out?" she asked sharply. "Out where?"

Kendall lifted his shoulders in a little shrug.

"Who knows?" he answered her carelessly. "Somewhere where things are good and hot. A newspaper syndicate wants their stuff piping hot, you know. Before, it was Tunisia. That's where I picked up the busted flipper and a few minor—er—difficulties. That's why I've been on leave. But, boy, oh, boy—I'll be back in action soon. And don't let anybody tell you a war correspondent doesn't see action, either."

"No, I won't," answered Taffy, setting her teeth hard in order to steady her voice a little as a waiter held her chair.

PEOPLE in the big, suavely furnished, elegant room turned to look at her. People recognized her. Friends began to troop to the table.

"And was I the world's chump to have selected a place like this to talk to you?" Kendall said, during a brief lull in the greetings. "I should have picked the railroad station, where we would have had some real privacy."

"After all, I do have a few friends and I *have* been away," she told him lightly, hugging warmly to her heart the thought that he was jealous of these interruptions.

Kendall surveyed her happily, admiringly.

"You are—you are—enchanting, Taffy! There's no other word for it! You're the loveliest thing I ever saw!" His voice was husky.

"It's the uniform," Taffy assured him, striving desperately for a light note.

And then she looked startled, and sat erect.

"Oh, but, good gracious—this is all wrong!" she gasped. "You and I are enemies—remember? We hate each other! You despise me—"

"Taffy—don't!" said Kendall swiftly and laid his uninjured hand over hers. "Taffy, why didn't you tell me you went out to see Jones and stayed with him until he—passed out?"

Taffy caught her breath and a little warm tide of color flowed over her face.

"Oh, so you found out about that," she said flatly, and her eyes were on her plate.

"Yes," said Kendall quietly. "Why didn't you tell me?"

Taffy tilted her head defiantly and her eyes were gray and smoky.

"Why should I?—You were having such fun hating me it seemed a shame to disappoint you. Besides, why should I feel it necessary to justify myself or my conduct to *you*?"

Kendall's face whitened a little beneath that and his jaw set. But he only said quietly:

"No reason at all, Taffy, only—well, I felt pretty badly when I discovered how I had misjudged you."

Unexpectedly, Taffy softened. There was the soft shimmer of tears in her eyes and her lips were soft and faintly tremulous.

"You didn't misjudge me, Ken," she

told him with a humility so utterly new and unexpected that Kendall's jaw dropped a little as he studied her. "I was just what you called me! You opened my eyes. I had never stopped to think that I was—so worthless and such a no-good. I thought I was pretty swell because I was Taffy Lansing and because my grandfather and his father before him had piled up an awful lot of money and left it to me. And then you came along and poked all sorts of holes in my self-esteem. Thank you for doing that, Ken!"

"Taffy!" Kendall said huskily.

She smiled at him, soft-eyed, her lips faintly tremulous.

"Thank you most of all for goading me into the WACS," she went on evenly, anxious to tell him all the things that were in her heart and that she herself was belatedly discovering. "I spent my first two weeks up there hating you savagely for every unpleasant thing I had to do! The first day on KP—"

Kendall laughed at her, tenderly, as at a beloved child.

"You on KP! Darling, what did you do to get KP? Sass an officer?"

"Oh, but KP isn't a punishment in the WACS," she explained swiftly. "It's just a routine part of duty. Everybody gets it—all the trainees, I mean! I went through it all right, because I was so busy hating you for getting me into it that the day was over before I realized it!"

"And the first week there, every time the sergeant came through at six in the morning, turning on the lights and saying in that brisk, authoritative voice, 'All right, girls, let's go—time's a-wastin'; I rolled out, almost with a smile, because I was so busy hating you. And when I drilled, and found I was the most awkward of an unprecedentedly awkward squad, I just hated you some more!"

She looked at him curiously, startled at a sudden thought.

"It's funny," she admitted in a small, almost frightened voice, "but I don't even remember when I stopped hating you and started loving the WACS!"

KENDALL'S hand was close and warm on hers and his eyes were glowing.

"Now, if you'd only said, when you

stopped hating me and started loving me," he said almost under his breath.

Taffy pulled her hand free of his and managed a light laugh. "What gives?" she said coolly. "Are you sweating out a date?"

Kendall stared at her. "G.I. talk!" he scolded. "And not a bit romantic! Certainly I'm trying to date you—for every single minute that you're home. Why not? After all, I'm the one that got you into the WACS. You owe me something, don't you?"

Taffy's eyes softened and she smiled at him.

"I do. I owe you a lot! I am grateful—"

"I don't want gratitude," said Kendall grimly. "I want a whole heck of a lot more than that."

"Why, Mr. Judson! And you that was so sure I was a no-good so-and-so!"

HER heart was beating so fast, singing a song that sent the blood flowing warmly through her veins, that she could even laugh at him a little.

"I've told you I'm sorry I misjudged you," he pleaded. "The afternoon I found that you did go to see Jones—well, I changed my whole attitude toward you. In fact, at the beginning I think one of the reasons why I wanted so to wallop you hard was that—you got under my skin! Much as I despised you, I wanted to smack you until you yelled for mercy, and then kiss you until you stopped yelling!"

"The—*the* caveman approach."

She managed the light tone with a terrific effort, and the speech wobbled a little.

Her eyes were bright, her lovely lips curved in a soft, half-smile that was enchanting.

He nodded soberly.

"It usually works, at that," he admitted. "I loathed myself for letting you get under my skin—yet I never wanted to kiss anyone so much—"

"You gave way to that desire—remember?" she couldn't keep reminding him gently.

He looked at her hard. His eyes on her soft lips with a hunger, a seeking, an ardent plea that made her feel as though she were being well and thoroughly kissed at that moment.

"I remember," he said briefly.

## CHAPTER VIII

## "I'LL WAIT FOR YOU"

RACING blood was pounding a war-dance through Taffy's veins and there was a bright, shining golden mist before her eyes. She was trembling a little. There wasn't any use trying to deny it. This was The Man!

She had started out by hating the sight of him, the sound of his voice. Now she knew that she was completely and utterly his from this moment forward. That he had only to whistle and she would follow him anywhere he chose to draw her.

She had not hated him at all. It had been love! Vaguely she remembered the theory that love and hate, both being such violent emotions, are so nearly alike that only a thin wall stands between them. And now she knew that this was true.

She drew a deep breath and lifted her shining eyes to Kendall's and he looked at her steadily, for a long moment.

For a long, long moment while the crowded restaurant seemed to drop away from them, leaving them completely alone in a little world all their own, that gaze continued. Their eyes met and clung and after that long breathless moment when her heart seemed to crowd up into her throat and speech was impossible, Kendall said an odd thing.

Huskily, his voice was not at all steady, he said:

"Don't be frightened, darling. I won't let you be hurt!"

Her smile was tremulous, her eyes misty, but her voice was surprisingly steady as she answered him:

"I know you won't!"

Once more there was a little silence as though the things their eyes said, and the steady rhythm of their hearts had no need for words. Kendall's hand was warm over hers, and they had forgotten that there was anyone else in the world.

"I can't ask you to marry me," he said after a long, still moment.

A quick little stab of terror pierced her and above it her voice shook just a little.

"Can't you, darling?" she asked.

His brows were drawn together in a little frown and his face was taut and set.

"How can I?" he argued, almost irritably resenting the truth of what he had just said. "You're in the Army. You're likely to be picked up any minute and carted off heaven knows where. And so am I. It's going to be bad enough letting you go away somewhere, while I go somewhere else. But if we were married—I couldn't take it, Sweet. I'd bundle you up in my arms and we'd run away somewhere and hide."

"If only we could!" Taffy whispered shakily.

"I know." His eyes kissed her and his hand held hers so tightly that there was pain in it. But she would not have had the pain eased by one tiny iota. "But when this war is over, if we're both still around . . . Oh, darling, *darling!*"

She smiled at him through eyes misty with tears.

"I'll be around," she promised him steadily. "I've got a good-luck charm. Just knowing that you—want me to be around will bring me back from wherever I may go!"

"You sweet!" said Kendall huskily. . . .

Kendall was coming to dinner and recklessly Taffy decided to make herself as exquisitely lovely and feminine as was possible—which was quite a lot. She stood before her mirror in a frock of ice-blue tulle that was all soft and billowy and threaded with delicate silver threads.

There were silver-strapped sandals with high heels on the feet that had grown accustomed to flat-heeled oxfords two sizes too large so that she could march and drill comfortably. The taffy-colored curls that had been tucked into a loose roll above her collar were now loose about her shoulders, held in place by a gardenia crisply fresh and pleased with its own perfection.

Her heart was hammering away like mad, its own special war-dance complete with tom-toms that only the thought of Kendall could bring about.

MARTHA came to tell her, "Mr. Judson is calling," and she stood still a moment, both hands above her heart as though by that she could ease the sud-

den tumult there. And then she laughed at herself and went swiftly down the stairs.

Kendall was waiting for her in the library, her favorite room. She went to him, and his arms opened for her and closed about her as though all his life-long his arms had ached with emptiness, for the feel of her there, warm and fragrant and sweet.

"I'd forgotten how lovely you are," he told her huskily.

She laughed up at him, starry-eyed.

"It's the dress," she told him. "Civvies after weeks of a uniform. But it's a grand uniform and I love it."

"Sure you do! And I don't know but what you look even more beautiful in it than in civvies! Such G.I. talk!"

Outside the library door they heard the sound of voices.

"We must go—the others are here," Taffy said, reluctant to part.

Kendall pulled her back into his arms to kiss her once more before, hand in hand, bright-eyed and flushed, they emerged from the library.

Mimi had just come downstairs and was greeting a tardy dinner guest as they emerged from the library.

She turned, slim and blond and radiantly lovely in black chiffon and pearls over a flesh-pink satin slip that made one wonder just a little where the slip left off and Mimi began. It was definitely what Mimi called "a hussy dress"—demure, yet provocative.

"Oh, there you are," she greeted Taffy lightly. Then her eyes went beyond Taffy and widened. "Why, Ken darling!" she cried to Kendall. "How nice! I didn't know you were back. You didn't tell me—"

Then she caught herself up and looked swiftly at Taffy and beneath her deft, careful make-up her color rose perceptibly.

Taffy stared from her to Kendall. "Why, I didn't know you two had met!" she said.

Mimi laughed a little tinkling laugh. "But, my dear, of course, we've met! Heavens, we've known each other for ages. Haven't we, Ken?" She tucked her hand through his arm with a little possessive manner that made Taffy clench her teeth.

"For months, anyway," said Kendall and met Taffy's puzzled eyes straightly.

"I knew Mimi before I knew you," he finished quietly.

"But you never told me—"

Taffy was hurt and puzzled and strangely apprehensive, though that, of course, was silly.

Kendall's lips curled ever so little and there was a teasing look in his eyes.

"But we didn't spend a lot of time talking about mutual acquaintances—remember? We had more important topics to discuss!"

And the swift color stained her cheeks as Mimi urged them all toward the drawing room where cocktails and canapés were being served and the half-dozen or more additional guests were already gathered.

The evening was gay and Taffy enjoyed it. There were two tables of bridge, and she and Kendall played as partners and won.

"We couldn't lose," Kendall murmured to her once, his eyes finishing the little sentence with a look that made her color deepen.

When the evening was over, and the guests were ready to leave, somebody offered Kendall a lift into town. While he hesitated a little, in the obvious hope of a moment alone with Taffy, Mimi unobtrusively but definitely saw that that didn't happen.

But he managed to whisper, as he held Taffy's hand closely:

"See you tomorrow for lunch, Sweet Thing? Same place?"

Taffy nodded in swift understanding and saw the door close behind him. She was in no mood for conversation with Mimi and she slipped upstairs to her own quarters while Mimi was occupied in the drawing room.

SHE curled up on the chaise-longue, without even undressing. She was happier than she had ever been before in all her life. She loved something infinitely precious, by Kendall's love. She was unwilling to exchange the bright coin of memories and dreams and hopes for the uncertainties of dreaming, and so she had no thought of going to bed.

It must have been almost an hour later when there was a knock at the door. Without waiting for permission to enter, Mimi opened the door and came in, a lovely vision in a creamy lace and satin negligee over a shell-pink

chiffon nightie. She carried a brown manila envelope in one hand, but tried to tuck it unobtrusively out of sight, as she smiled at Taffy sweetly.

"Darling, are you too tired for a little talk tonight?" she asked brightly.

"We-ell, I *am* a little tired," Taffy hoped that would stave off Mimi's expected demand, ever so prettily phrased, of course, for an increase in her allowance, an extra check perhaps to meet some extravagance. "Can't it wait?"

Mimi laughed. "It can, of course. But I'd be much more certain to sleep if I had it off my chest. It's a matter of the gravest importance to me, Taffy—life and death, really. For if you say 'Yes' I'll really begin to live. If you say 'No'—"

Apparently that prospect was too horrible to contemplate, for she made a little gesture that was almost a shudder.

"Then let's get it over with, by all means," said Taffy a trifle dryly, be-

sand a year is nothing to you—you could spare it from your income without missing it at all. And the Hayden Street house is vacant and if we could have that. It could be done over into something really nice. Not as nice as this, of course, but attractive—"

"Of course, Mimi," said Taffy instantly. "Have you got something there for me to sign to make it all neat and legal and everything?" There was the barest possible hint of dryness in her tone, because she understood Mimi so well.

"Well, as a matter of fact, I do happen to have a few scraps." Mimi handed over the brown manila envelope. "And, darling, you won't tell him, will you?" she said with a little eager rush. "That I asked you for anything. He thinks I have my income whether I remarry or not. He'd be furious if he thought I'd asked you to finance our marriage. Ken's such an idiot—but a darling idiot!"

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cause she had for a long time been accustomed to the dramatics—almost melodramatics—with which Mimi got what she wanted.

Mimi hesitated, then she said with the air of one feeling for her words, testing each one carefully before she put it into speech:

"You know about your father's will, and your grandfather's. That I am to have twenty-five thousand dollars a year, as long as I live with you, and remain unmarried? But that if I remarry, I am to lose everything?"

"Yes, of course, but—"

"I'm in love, Taffy," Mimi cut in swiftly and now her voice was earnest, sincere, wholly free of affectation. "I'm terribly, madly, crazily in love, and I want to be married. But he hasn't any money except what he earns, and I'm—rather an expensive person. I can't saddle him with a penniless wife. Now, can I?"

"No, of course not," Taffy said quickly.

Mimi's face lit up with eager delight. "Oh, darling, you *do* understand!" She sighed happily. "I thought that if you wouldn't mind—twenty-five thou-

TAFFY'S hand froze on the paper where she had just scrawled "Daphne Lansing." She looked up at Mimi, puzzled, bewildered.

"Kendall Judson?" she demanded sharply. "What's he got to do with it?"

Mimi's china-blue eyes widened and Mimi's feathery brows went up.

"But, darling, I thought you understood," she answered, surprised. "Ken is the man I'm going to marry, of course."

Taffy sat stock-still, with the feeling that there had been a loud crash about her and that if she were still she would be in no danger of being hurt.

"Mimi—you're fooling!" she managed to say at last, a desperate plea in her voice that Mimi would laugh and admit she had been joking.

"I was never more serious in my life," protested Mimi with spirit. "Oh, I suppose you think the fact that I'm a couple of years older than Ken—"

She was a good five years, perhaps more, and Taffy knew it.

"But Ken!" Taffy blurted. "I—That is, I thought—" Then she bit her tongue and the pain helped a little to clear her dazed senses.

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CHAPTER IX  
LOVE BRINGS PAIN

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MIMI was watching Taffy closely, and now Mimi's voice was soft and regretful.

"That naughty Ken! He was flirting with you! How too bad of him! I accused him of it after dinner, but he only laughed and said 'Well, you wanted her to like me, didn't you? How else could you get her to be willing for you to marry me.'"

Taffy's heart caught on the edge of a strangled sob.

"Oh, no—no!" she whispered, remembering all the loveliness of her hours with Kendall.

"Oh, darling, I'm so terribly sorry!" Mimi said, her tone warm with pitying tenderness. "I didn't dream you'd take him seriously. I thought you'd just flirt with him a little, and that you'd like each other. I didn't know he would behave so badly! But he despised you so—and I tried so hard to make him realize what a grand person you really are. Then when we found you were coming home for a few days, I begged him to be especially nice to you. But my dear, I am so terribly sorry! I'd no idea you'd really care for him like that!"

Pride came to Taffy's aid. She knew Mimi hated her. They had always disliked each other. And she knew, too, that Mimi was reveling in this moment of her own humiliation and pain. The thought that she was letting down her guard before her sworn enemy gave her the strength to straighten, to look Mimi straight in the face and laugh a little.

"Don't be ridiculous!" she said icily. "You surely didn't think I'd fall for a cheap fortune-hunter like Kendall Judson? I've known fortune-hunters all my life. I could take Kendall away from you tomorrow, if I wanted to—but I don't! You've got your income and your house. And I wish you luck with your—bought husband! You'll need it."

Mimi was on her feet, her face white with anger. But she dared not give vent to her anger. She only snatched the

signed papers, the transfer of stock and deeds to the house, out of Taffy's hands and went swiftly out of the room, banging the door behind her.

Taffy stumbled to the door and turned the key in the lock before she collapsed on the bed, her face muffled against her pillows in a storm of wild weeping.

She could see so clearly what a fool she had been. How Mimi and Ken must have laughed at her! What an easy conquest she had been! She tried not to believe what Mimi had said, but her mind marched steadily back to the first time she had seen Kendall. He had denounced her furiously as everything he despised. The second morning he had come back with more insults. Even that night at the hotel, before she had gone away to camp, he had still been insulting and hateful.

And then today, he had suddenly—she could see now that it had been much too suddenly and that she'd been a fool to believe him—softened and begun to tell her how much he loved her. Word by word she went over their conversation at the restaurant today, carefully. Not one single time had Kendall said, in so many words, "I love you!" He had even said, "I can't ask you to marry me!"

She writhed with bitter humiliation and pain at that memory. No, he couldn't very well ask her to marry him—not when he was planning to marry Mimi, as soon as they could be sure of the continuance of Mimi's income!

She didn't for a moment believe that he knew nothing of Mimi's scheme to guarantee the continuance of that income. He and Mimi had plotted it together. And he had "flirted with Taffy"—she caught her breath on a little sob as she remembered Mimi's phrase—in order to make Taffy like him so she would agree to the wedding.

TAFFY had never given her love before. She had been cool and airy and self-possessed before attacks on her heart—or her estate, she grimly reminded herself. She had learned a long time ago that it was more often the latter, than the former. But she loved Kendall Judson and she had been in a seventh heaven of delight for a little while believing that he loved her. Now she could see that that was pretty



funny. What a blind, conceited little fool she had been to believe him this afternoon in the hotel, when he so suddenly disclaimed all his old dislike of her and let her believe he loved her!

Suddenly the very house where she lay was unbearable to her. On sudden impulse she went to the telephone, called a taxi, and began to get out of the frail ice-blue frock and back into her uniform. She hurled into her overnight bag the few necessities she had brought with her, and slipped downstairs.

She was on the curb in front of the

There was a little stab of pain at her heart.

"Sorry, Mr. Judson," Taffy said quietly, "but I don't want to play any more." Before he could answer, she put down the telephone.

When it rang again, she shook her head at the girl who had summoned her.

"Please say that I do not care to talk to him," she said clearly.

She hid her face in her pillow as she lay wakeful that night. But she was dimly proud of herself that she did not weep. She had finished with tears, she

## *"I Guess I've Been Carrying a Torch—the Wrong Way!"*

ON THE TRAIN, the car wheels were singing, and Candy's heart was singing, just one refrain: "Evan! Evan! Evan!"

AND THEN—he was beside her, laughing-eyed Evan, kissing her! Candy was stirred, overwhelmed with happiness and excitement—until he began to talk . . . and she found out that he regarded her as just a pal! She had rushed to meet him with her heart held out to him in her two eager hands—and he didn't want it. . . .

HOW CANDY handles this situation is told in *COME BACK TO ME*, a novel by Virginia Brightman that reaches emotional heights and depths seldom surpassed! You'll enjoy every bit of this fascinating romance!

### COMING NEXT ISSUE

house when the taxi drew up. The following morning she was back at camp.

If anybody was surprised at having her back before her three-day pass expired, nobody said so. Although Thelma looked at her curiously and said:

"Baby, that must have been quite a furlough you had. You look awful."

"Thanks—but you can't win me by flattery," was the best Taffy could manage.

Late that afternoon, there was a long distance telephone call for her, and when she lifted the receiver, Kendall said in her ear:

"Hey, what gives? Why the blazes did you run out on me?"

told herself grimly. She had too much pride and too much self-respect to go around weeping over a man as worthless as Kendall Judson.

She flung herself into her work with a single-minded concentration that won her the attention and liking of her instructors. When, two nights after her return to camp, Thelma and several of the others wanted her to go to the Service Club for a couple of hours, she excused herself so firmly that they could not find an argument.

But after they were gone, she sat in a deep chair in a corner of the day room, a book on her knees, but without turning so much as a page. She would have



given anything she possessed, she told herself almost frantically, to have had the privilege of privacy—a room, no matter how tiny or cheerless, into which she could go and close the door and be alone. But that, of course, was out of the question.

Someone came across and sat down beside her. When she looked up, her eyes cold and unfriendly, she recognized the girl whose husband had been taken prisoner at Bataan.

"Tell me to go away and mind my own business, if you like, Lansing," offered the girl pleasantly, a warm, friendly smile touching her soft lips, yet without affecting the somber tragedy in her eyes. "But—this isn't the way. What you're doing is all wrong. The instinct is to crawl away into a hole and die—because you don't want to live any more. But we can't do that. We've all got a job to do, no matter how little and unimportant it may seem. And you can't do a job of work with your head buried in your arms to hide the tears. You see—I know. I've at least learned that much."

Taffy looked at her in pity and sick understanding.

"I don't know what happened while you were away, Lansing," the girl—Taffy thought her name was Foster—went on, quietly. "It's none of my business. I have no right to know. But you're in the Army now, and whatever affects one of us, it has to be of interest to the others. We're a team, all pulling together, and we can't turn our heads the other way if one of the team weakens and falls out. So—come on, Lansing. Let's go up to the Service Club, and have a soft drink, and listen to the music. Maybe dance a little and hear people laugh!"

**S**HE straightened and her chin went up and her eyes were steady and grave.

"Ever stop to realize what it means, Lansing, just to hear people laugh? It's a medicine. It's a tonic for the soul. Even if you can't laugh yourself, you can hear other people. And though you think now it would rasp your nerves unmercifully, believe me, Lansing, in the long run it will help. I've—proved that! I know!"

Foster's courage and quiet good sense

and friendliness had helped Taffy over a bad moment. Now, feeling a little humble because her grief and heartache, in comparison with Foster's, seemed so petty and cheap, she got up and went to the long mirror.

Above its top it proudly wore a sign that read:

YOU ARE LOOKING AT THE BEST  
DRESSED, MOST PATRIOTIC  
GIRL IN THE WORLD

Taffy powdered her nose, outlined her lips, tucked a stray strand of curls beneath the brim of her cap and turned to Foster, saluting lightly, smiling. And together, arm in arm, they walked up the wide, white road that glimmered in the moonlight like a freshly iced cake.

The tall pines, the wind entangled eternally in their great branches, spread a brilliant mosaic of ebony and silver for their feet. All about them, the sounds of the night were inaudible—the chirp of crickets mingling pleasantly with the chatter of voices from the buildings along Pallas Avenue, the sound of a radio here and there; feminine laughter.

The valley which sheltered the Training Center was green-clothed. The gently rolling sweep on the left of the avenue was ranked with white-painted buildings glowing in the moonlight. On the left the woods rose steeply.

The beauty of the night and the setting made Taffy's heart ache with loneliness. But she set her teeth hard. She had to get Kendall Judson out of her mind, out of her thoughts—most of all, out of her heart. He had played her the shabbiest of all tricks, in making use of her to smooth the way for his marriage to Mimi.

She told herself that she didn't for a moment believe that he had not known of Mimi's plot to guarantee their future by securing permanently the income which should, according to her father-in-law's will, have ceased with her remarriage. Mimi had merely tried to protect his self-esteem in pretending that he hadn't known.

Any girl with a nickel's worth of self-respect, Taffy told herself furiously, would have been able to despise a man who would stoop to such trickery. But she knew, with a desolate sinking of her heart, that it was going to take a long

time for her to get the image of Kendall Judson out of her heart.

Ahead of them, topping the rather steep rise in the glimmering white road, the Service Club stood out, gracious and mellow and freshly white, beneath the silver-and-ebony mosaic of moonlight and tree shadows. There was the sound of music, laughter, voices. The windows glowed with yellow light.

In spite of herself, Taffy found her tired heart lifting just a little. Foster had been right. Troubles and sorrow only bred on darkness and loneliness. They grew worse with every hour of hugging them to one's breast in solitude.

As they went up the steps, Taffy's head went up a little and she squared her shoulders.

"Atta girl, Lansing!" Foster said, smiling. "Where's the good old G. I. smile?"

"Right where it will do the most good," Taffy answered sturdily.

And from somewhere deep inside, she brought up a gallant smile and pinned it with determination to her soft lips.

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## CHAPTER X

### THE HEART'S SORROW

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WITHIN the Service Club flowed a river of khaki. The great picture window at the far end of the room framed an enchanting vista of moonlight and tree shadows, and was framed itself by the amusing and interesting soldier-painted murals depicting the "Life of a WAC." A mural of which every WAC was justifiably proud.

A girl in a uniform marked by a sergeant's stripes on her sleeve sat at the beautiful baby grand piano, playing with the smooth, accustomed touch of the trained musician. Grouped about her, a solid mass of boys and girls in khaki were singing lustily. Other girls and men sat about on the deeply cushioned maple chairs with their colorful chintz and tapestry covers. In the game room the ping-pong table was surrounded by another crowd, yelling encouragement to the team playing.

But it was toward the small lounge

at the left of the doorway that Taffy and Foster moved. And as they stood in the door, looking for a table or even a stool at the bar where they might hope to be served with the serviceman and servicewoman's favorite soft drink, Thelma hailed them.

"Hiya, kids," she called from a table where she sat with a group. "Come on over here! Always room for one or two more."

Taffy and Foster smiled down at Thelma, Lois Jordan, Dave, and Jerry Marlowe. Jerry and Dave reached out and from somewhere produced two more chairs. It was all gay and pleasant and cheerful.

When they were settled Jerry leaned closer to Taffy and eyed her as though the job were a pleasant one, productive of much pleasure.

"Long time no see," he said in a pleasantly admiring, almost caressing tone. "You've been away. But you haven't changed a bit, unless to grow more beautiful."

Several other soldiers had gathered about the table and the laughter and repartee was rapidly growing hilarious when Taffy looked up as though someone had called her name. And then her hands clenched hard in her lap and she sat dead still. Her heart gave a great, painful lurch, then settled down to that crazy war-dance, complete with tom-toms, that always commenced when she saw Kendall Judson.

For it was Kendall Judson standing in the doorway, beside a short, plump woman whose single gold bar on the collar of her trim uniform designated her rank. The woman was looking about the outer room, while Kendall's tired eyes searched the cocktail lounge. And then his eyes found Taffy, and he said something to the lieutenant who smiled, nodded and went away.

For a moment Kendall stood quite still looking straight at Taffy. There was anger and hurt and accusation in his eyes when finally he came across to her and stood beside the table looking down at her, ignoring the others who looked at him curiously, then at Taffy.

"I'd like to talk to you in private," stated Kendall curtly.

Taffy had managed to subdue her racing heart and to exhibit an outward composure that was cool and deliber-

ately insolent. He had left her nothing but the tattered remnants of her pride but at least she could wrap herself in those few remnants and hide her cold and her desolation behind a mask of insolence. He had hurt her terribly, but he should never have the satisfaction of knowing that. Instead, she would try her level best to hurt him just as badly—though she knew drearily that she couldn't possibly do that because he did not love her as she loved him.

"Sorry," she told him, her voice a deliberate slap. "I'm afraid I don't want to listen to anything you have to say—privately or otherwise."

KENDALL'S face tautened and paled a little. The little group about the table was acutely uncomfortable, but only the soldiers who were standing could manage to drift unobtrusively away.

"Taffy, for Pete's sake!" Kendall exploded savagely. "I don't know what's the matter with you—but surely I deserve some sort of explanation. And there's no reason why your friends should be burdened by our entirely private battle!"

"What's private about it?" demanded Taffy, her voice sleek with contempt. "And what's all the fuss? I played around with you and it was fun for a while. But then you began to bore me. There's your explanation, and the truth, all at once. So please go away."

Kendall leaned on the back of Thelma's chair, oblivious to Thelma who was looking up at him and then at Taffy, round-eyed and obviously enjoying this puzzling exchange.

"I don't know what the devil's got into you," Kendall said grimly, "but if you've forgotten our day together in town—"

Taffy managed a little silvery, amused laugh, though tears were dropping in her heart. She was in a panic lest her control slip and she let him glimpse something of what she was suffering, and why.

"Apparently you've forgotten our first meeting," she reminded him dryly. "I haven't—nor the second. Nor even the third. You surely didn't think I was going to let you get away with the things you said to me then?"

Kendall's eyes widened and then nar-

rowed. His jaw set so hard that there was a little quiver of the muscles along it, and his eyes were dark with shock and bitterness.

"Are you trying to tell me, Taffy, that you were just pretending—that day in town?" he demanded sharply.

They had both forgotten the others who could do nothing but listen. Uncomfortable, yet interested, in spite of themselves.

"Pretending? Well, after all, what did you expect?" Taffy's voice was cool and insultingly sweet. "Remember, I didn't plan it. We simply bumped into each other and you—sort of went overboard. I didn't even give you a push! I thought it would be fun to—well, to string you along a bit. But of course, neither of us was serious, so there's no harm done."

"I was serious, and you jolly well know it," Kendall cut in sharply and looked as though he would deeply enjoy wringing her pretty neck. "So I was right about you the first time! The things I said—"

Taffy smiled and nodded and prayed desperately that he would get out quickly, before her control broke and all her defenses went down before him.

"The things you said that first time were atoned for by what happened the other day, so now we are quits! You told me what you thought of me, and I made you eat your words. Now there's nothing else to be said between us."

Taffy's eyes shifted a little away from his and she saw Jerry sitting beside her, looking white and uncomfortable. With a sudden inspiration, Taffy slid her hand through Jerry's arm and lifted a bright, taunting face to Kendall's angry eyes.

"And since you are here," she said sweetly, "I'd like you to meet my fiancé—my really-for-true fiancé! Private Marlowe, Mr. Judson."

"Hey!" Jerry said, startled, protesting.

Taffy's fingers closed hard and imploringly on his arm and she laid her cheek against his shoulder for an instant and laughed.

"Oh, I know, darling, we weren't going to tell anybody yet. But after all, these are our friends. We'd want them to know first."

Kendall looked down at Jerry.

"Condolences, sucker," he said savagely. "You'll need them!"

And before anybody could move, to say or do anything, Kendall turned on his heel and walked out.

THERE was a little stunned silence when he had gone and then Taffy said huskily:

"Thanks, Jerry, for helping me out."

"Oh, think nothing of it!" Jerry was irate, uncomfortable, his eyes seeking Lois' white face that was turned away from him. "Always glad to be of service—even at the expense of my own love life!"

"That was pretty raw, Lansing," Thelma accused her hotly. "Why didn't you give the man a break, and brush him off in private?"

"He had it coming to him!" Taffy said through clenched teeth. "It's no more than he deserved."

"Then he must have been a thorough-going, all-time O'Sullivan—the heel made to be walked on and kicked about!" Thelma said hotly.

"He is," said Taffy, and stood up suddenly, knowing that she couldn't hold back the tears much longer, and that she must get out of there before she broke down ignominiously. "I'm sorry, Jerry. I hope you'll forgive me. It was just a crazy impulse to—to sort of get rid of him once and for all."

Lois turned her white face and looked swiftly at Taffy.

"You—you mean you're not really engaged to Jerry?" she said unsteadily.

"Goodness, no!" Taffy said, startled, wide-eyed.

Jerry winced a little.

"Obviously, the idea has never occurred to her," he commented mildly, though his eyes were angry. "And in spite of all the time I've put on 'sweating out' a few dates with her."

Lois beamed at Taffy and the color came back to her face.

"Thanks, Taffy," she said shakily.

Jerry stared at her, puzzled.

"Look, you didn't believe that cockeyed announcement, did you?" he demanded sharply.

"It sounded quite convincing," Lois admitted.

"Convincing? When I've worked so hard to convince you that if I felt this way any time for marriage, with the

world coming apart at the seams, I'd have dragged you off to the nearest parson long ago?" Jerry was righteously indignant.

They had forgotten her, and Taffy was free to escape.

She didn't know why Kendall had come here to camp to see her. She knew he must have had some difficulty in making the trip and securing permission. But why should he go to that bother? Unless of course, he and Mimi had quarreled and he had decided that after all, he could marry the heiress to the Lansing estate and not just someone who enjoyed a small income from it.

It hurt cruelly to think that the Lansing money might have been a golden prize dangling before Kendall's eyes. But what else could she believe? It was by no means the first time a personable young man had tried desperately to marry her—because of the Lansing estate.

And at the first Kendall had been so frank in his contempt and dislike for her. It wasn't reasonable to suppose, she told herself while she huddled for a while in the dense shadow of a tall pine and fought out some measure of her heartache, that he could have changed so completely, just by learning that she *had* gone to see Pfc. Jones!

No, it had to be a quarrel with Mimi—and the lure of the Lansing estate. And that was a thought that hurt so deeply that Taffy had to clench her teeth above the little sob of pain in her throat.

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## CHAPTER XI

### LOVE IS CALLING

---

HARDER than ever, Taffy plunged into her work. She discovered that if she worked hard and crowded every possible moment full to the brim, she could be so exhausted when she tumbled into bed that she could sleep.

She disciplined her thoughts so that she never allowed herself to think of Kendall during her waking hours. And if now and then she dreamed about him and awoke to find her pillow damp with tears—well, surely a girl couldn't be blamed for her dreams, could she?

Her devotion to duty, her deep concentration on any task, large or small, that came her way brought its inevitable reward.

She was summoned one morning to her superior's office and there questioned. She spoke French, German and Italian fluently, didn't she? She had studied abroad? She could write, as well as read, the three languages?

She answered yes to all these questions, was given a stiff oral examination, some written work to do. For a few days, she heard nothing more. Until one morning, she was notified that she was being transferred and would report to Colonel Evanston, of the Intelligence Department in Washington.

She was excited, of course. What girl would not have been? But she hated to leave Oglethorpe, too. She had made friends here—girls whom she probably could never have met in civilian life. Girls whose former background, whose home environment were of no importance whatever, but whose work in the WAC had proved them to be the sort of girl any one would want to know.

Foster and Lois Jordan and Thelma saw her off at the station, having secured three-hour passes for the purpose.

"Thanks, Taffy, for waking Jerry up," whispered Lois with shining eyes. "He's been scared to death of getting married, in times like these. But after all, these are the only times we have or know that we will have. We're going to be married in a few days, as soon as we can get a few days' leave, and no matter what happens, we'll have that much to remember."

Thelma was going to be married, too. She and Dave. She was a little smug about it, pleased to death with herself and ready to fight anybody who might dare to hint that Dave, small, rather mousy and far from the motion picture hero type, was not the world's best matrimonial bet.

"He suits me," Thelma said happily, "and thank goodness, I suit him. So what business is it of anybody else's?"

Taffy looked back at them as the train pulled out. Three girls in the uniform of their country's service—slim, trim, capable, ready for whatever task might come their way. Three girls who were an ornament to the WACS, just as the WACS were an ornament to the

country in whose service they so proudly stood.

Her eyes misted just a little, then she straightened her shoulders beneath her trim, smartly-fitted uniform and promised herself she would live up to the ideals of the other girls. They were bright and shining ideals that would keep any girl working to accomplish. . . .

Washington was as crowded, as frantic, as busy as Taffy had been warned it would be. But she was assigned to quarters and reported to Colonel Evanston. He was a middle-aged, grizzled man, a veteran of the Service, with a round, florid face and good-natured, twinkling blue eyes. Those eyes could, some of his subordinates would assure you grimly, look a hole straight through you if you dared to attempt gold-bricking.

He looked Taffy over as she marched into the office, presented him with a snappy salute, complete with a pleasant, eager smile, saying briskly:

"Private Lansing reporting for duty, sir."

**C**OL. EVANSTON looked her over from the tips of her burnished brown oxfords to the top of her visored cap.

"Young lady, I was one of those who fought the idea of women in the Service," he told her grimly. "I'm still fighting it. You kids haven't any business in uniforms, trotting around learning to be soldiers. But I need somebody like the devil who can do just what your commanding officer says you can. So we'll see what you can do. But mind you, I'll stand no nonsense and no shilly-shallying. I expect the same discipline and the same efficiency from you I'd expect from any man in my outfit."

"Yes, sir," Taffy said promptly.

He peered at her hard again and nodded.

From that moment on she was conscious of his watching her. He was a hard, but a fair and impartial, taskmaster. There was work to be done; a tremendous amount of it. Some of it was tedious and tiresome, some of it was exciting and stimulating. But whatever it was, she did it with every atom of her brain, her strength and her resourcefulness. .



She won the liking and the respect of her fellow-workers. And, gradually, as the days sped past, she knew that she had won Colonel Evanston's admiration; grudging at first and then wholehearted.

She was notified one morning that she was being transferred. She was to pack and be ready for the transfer at three hours' notice. And at midnight she found herself aboard ship, in a huge convoy, sailing for Europe—and the fulfillment of every WAC'S most cherished dream, and hope, and ambition.

She was too tired to be excited about it at first. But with weariness came the memory of Kendall Judson and the shameful way he had made use of her to smooth his financial path toward Mimi. And the thought of that hurt her so badly that she looked about her to find something to do.

\* \* \* \* \*

Back in what now seemed those centuries-gone days of peace when life had been pleasant and one's chief concern had been to keep from being bored, Taffy had been in London. But this was a new London; a London geared to an all-out effort to win a total war. A London where one learned to smile and to keep going, no matter what happened.

She shared a service-flat—in which there was no service, since every able-bodied man and woman was engaged in war work, something far more important than cleaning rooms and cooking meals—with three other WACS. She worked long, hard hours, and she loved it.

What eventually happened was inevitable, of course. One morning she took notes for her commanding officer while he held a press conference. And in the group of twenty-five or thirty top-flight newspaper men and women who crowded the office, she saw Kendall.

There was a moment in which she felt as though she had received a terrific blow above the heart. A blow that wiped out all sight save that of Kendall's face, a little thinner, a little more stern, a little browner. A blow that wiped out all sound and movement so that she could not know if someone spoke to her or not.

Everything within her cried out to

Kendall. It was only by a heroic effort that whitened her face and set her soft lips in taut lines that she managed not to jump to her feet, to run to him, to throw herself into his arms.

She heard her commanding officer begin to speak, and managed to force down her personal worries and thoughts and to concentrate on her work. But she was sharply, tinglingly conscious of Kendall throughout the hour-long conference that seemed to her to stretch endlessly on into space. She did not dare look up, lest she lose her place in her notes, and not be able to produce exactly what her commanding officer wanted when he asked for it. So she did not know the moment when Kendall saw her and knew her.

**B**UT when the conference was over and her commanding officer stood up, smiled and said briskly, "And that's about all, gentlemen—and ladies!" She got to her feet and looked at Kendall.

She met his eyes, watching her, and there was a look in those eyes of his that whipped her with sharp, steel-tipped thoughts.

For a long moment they looked straight at each other, without speaking, only the length of the small office between them. Her heart rose up in her throat and there was a little mist before her eyes. But she could not have spoken if her life had depended on it.

It seemed to her that that moment lasted for hours. Then, still without a word, Kendall turned on his heel and walked out of the room.

For just a moment, Taffy was still. And then she said swiftly to the startled officer beside her:

"Oh, please, sir, I'll be back in a moment! But—but I've got to go now!"

She ran across the room, tugged the door open and ran into the big, dim-lit, echoing corridor. Ahead of her Kendall, moving fast, was just about to turn the corner and disappear down the stairs into the street. And if he did, she would never find him again.

She was too shaken to realize that that was exactly what should happen. That seeing him, talking to him, was going to be like turning the knife in her heart. But she didn't think of that, she only ran after him calling wildly:

"Oh, Ken—Ken! Please wait!"

## CHAPTER XII

## LIFE'S SUPREME GIFT

KEN heard her, Taffy knew. But for an instant it looked as though he was not going to heed her. And then, in that instant when he would have turned the corner and gone down the stairs, he stiffened, turned, and looked at her with cold, accusing, stormy eyes.

"Yes?" he said curtly. "I'm in rather a hurry."

She brought up short, within reach of him, panting a little because she had been running—most of all because her heart was pounding so hard that the force of it checked her breathing and shook her strong young body.

"I just wanted to say—hello!" she stammered idiotically.

Kendall did not smile. His eyes merely took her in and there was a veil behind which his real self seemed to hide.

"Hello!" he said, grimly polite.

Taffy drew a long, hard breath.

"Is—Mimi with you?" she asked brightly, her voice shaking a little in spite of her efforts to control it.

Kendall looked at her, bewildered, resentful.

"Mimi?" he demanded. "Why the devil should she be?"

"That's right," she babbled. "Of course, they don't allow war-correspondent's wives to go into Foreign Service."

Kendall caught her by the shoulders and shook her hard, scowling down at her, his lips angry and bitter.

"What the devil are you talking about?" he demanded sharply. "What's Mimi got to do with my being here? Have you gone off your pretty little nut?"

Taffy drew a long hard breath and smiled at him faintly.

"It's all right, Ken. I was just startled at seeing you here. I imagined as soon as you and Mimi were married—"

His voice cut sharply across hers.

"Married? Mimi and I? For the love of *Pete*, Taffy, you *are* batty! You've no business over here."

She braced her shoulders a little.

"It's all right," she repeated quietly.

"Mimi told me all about it—that you were in love with her and afraid that I'd object to her marrying you, though I don't see why I should have. But she said that you were anxious for me to l-l-like you—"

He shook her again, by no means gently.

"Will you kindly stop babbling?" he stormed at her furiously. "Are you by any chance trying to tell me that you honestly believed that I cared two pins for Mimi?"

"Mimi told me that you were in love, that you wanted to marry her." The breath died in her throat before the look in his eyes.

"And you believed any such arrant nonsense, such complete idiocy as that?" he raged. "You, of all people! When I'd tried my darnedest to convince you I was in love with you!"

She was as still as a stone for a long moment. She was blinded by a sudden radiance, as though a star-shell had fallen through the roof and exploded at her feet, flooding the long, dim-lit hall with an illumination so great she had to close her eyes against it.

After what seemed to her hours of savoring the thought she put it into words.

"Then—then you're not in love with Mimi?"

"That's what I'm trying to tell you," he snapped. "And if you'd had sense enough to come in out of the rain, you'd have known at the first that Mimi was lying. Or am I fooling myself? You see, I sort of got the crazy idea that you—cared a little for me."

SHE lifted eyes that were starry with a radiance that came from her inmost heart.

"You know that I love you with all my heart!" she told him steadily, trembling so that but for his hands that held her shoulders she could not have stood up.

He was scowling at her ferociously, and his lips were a thin, bitter line, his eyes angry.

"You claim you love me, yet the first dizzy blonde who comes to you with a cock-eyed story, you forget all about having any faith in me, and accept her word as law. Then you light into me in a room full of WACS and soldiers and

make me feel a little cheaper than a canceled postage stamp!" He was still angry with her, and his eyes were still cold and accusing. But his breath was coming a little faster, a little more unevenly. "You claim to love me—yet you could hurt me like that!"

There were tears dimming the radiance in her eyes, and her soft lips were tremulous, her voice shaken.

"But I hurt myself—so much more, dearest," she stammered.

He was still accusing. He tried to take his hands away from her shoulders, but she was trembling so, swaying a little that his arms went about her and

the WACS have done for you, Taffy. You're a different girl. And I had heard from the nurse of the way you sat beside that poor devil, Hartley Jones, and I had already begun to suspect that I had misjudged you—"

"You hadn't, darling, you hadn't!"

"I'm beginning to believe I misjudged you at the last, rather than at the first!" Kendall told her grimly, not at all as though he liked having her in his arms, after all.

"Mimi can be very convincing when she has something to gain by it," Taffy told him, humble and contrite and eager to win his forgiveness. "She said that

## Love's Enigma



*I did not understand your moods,  
Your sorrows or your glee—  
You were a great big question mark,  
A mystery to me.*

*I tried to learn what makes you tick,  
The reason for your charms—  
And all the time I could have found  
The answer in your arms!*

—HELEN ARDSLEY.

drew her close, not as though he wanted to hold her, but merely as though he didn't want her to collapse at his feet.

"But why, Taffy?" he demanded sharply. "In the name of all that's reasonable, why should you have believed her? Why couldn't you have come to me, given me at least the benefit of the doubt—instead of tearing us both to pieces with all this—this going on?"

"Because I'm a silly fool, I guess," she told him simply and contritely. "We fought so hard when we first met, and then the first time you saw me in uniform, you—you seemed to—well, to change so suddenly—"

"It wasn't sudden, and it was you who had changed," he cut in swiftly. "You probably don't realize how much

she wanted to marry you but that—her income would stop with her remarriage. And she was a very expensive person and you—couldn't afford to marry her unless she could be sure of that income. She wanted me to deed her a house and some bonds and things that would guarantee her an income sufficient for—"

She stopped, appalled by the fury in Kendall's face. He thrust her away from him as though he didn't even like the feel of her there in his arms.

"So you thought I'd been playing around," he demanded savagely, "winning your confidence, trying to get you to like me, making love to you, in short, so that you'd give Mimi money enough to marry me? Why, you—you—" He strangled on the word, so angry was he.

"I'm—s-s-sorry," Taffy said humbly.

"I should think you would be! And like a fool, I thought you loved me!"

"I do, darling, I do!"

"You couldn't—not the way I mean it!" Kendall said sharply. "You couldn't possibly love me and then believe such a yarn as that! And that's the only love I want—the kind that is loyal and honest and trusting! Without those things, it's not love! Not in my book, anyway!"

HE TURNED away from her and Taffy stood still, watching him go, her heart in her boots. Because this was the end. He was angry with her; he was disgusted; he didn't think her love worth having. He didn't want it. And that was all there was to it. There was nothing she could do. No need to try to call him back. He wouldn't come.

She stood where she was until the last sound of his footsteps died away on the stairs. And then she made herself turn and go back down the corridor to her office. It was all over and done with. She had thought her love for Kendall was dead. She had tried so hard to kill it, to tear it out of her heart, to bury it so deeply beneath a wave of work and concentration on the war effort and every tiny thing she could do to help.

Then she had seen him again and she had known that her love for him would endure as long as there was breath in her body. But Kendall knew the truth now, and she was beneath his contempt. Now, it was truly finished and there was nothing she could do about it.

Taffy never remembered how she got through the rest of the day. She must have managed without too many mistakes, for nobody found fault with her. When the day was over she turned toward the small service-flat, remembering that this was her evening to get dinner. Otherwise, she would not have gone home at all. She was late, and she imagined the other girls would be there ahead of her. So she hurried a little, thankful that the food for tonight's meal was already in the flat.

She went swiftly up the stairs, saw the thread of light beneath the door, and did not bother to find her key. The door was unlocked and she opened it and stepped into the pleasant little sitting room, with its blackout curtains carefully drawn.

And then she stood still. For Kendall was there waiting for her. And there was no sign of her apartment mates.

"They've gone out to dinner," Kendall explained, as though this were important. "Very thoughtful girls—considerate, too. I explained to them that I had a spot of groveling to do before you, and that I'd appreciate it a lot if I could have a certain amount of privacy in which to do it. I knew some fellows who leaped at the chance of taking three pretty American girls out to dinner, so it all worked out beautifully."

"I'm awfully tired, Ken," Taffy said, above the tears that clogged her throat. "I don't feel like battling any more. Can't we j-j-just call it quits, and let it go at that?"

"Darling sweet!" Kendall said, his tone adoring, gentle. "I've been a no-good so-and-so. But you made me so darned mad when you admitted frankly that you thought I'd team up with Mimi to put over such a shabby trick! I've been walking all afternoon and thinking hard, and I think I understand now. Having such a whale of a lot of money has made you suspicious. You're pretty as the dickens and cute as a bug's ear, and any man could fall for you easy as anything. But you've probably been warned to look out for fortune-hunters, so you have become suspicious of everybody. Right?"

"Something like that," she confessed humbly.

Kendall looked down at her tenderly.

"We've both seen a little something of what's happening in the world today, sweet," he told her gravely. "Somehow, I don't think things like money and social position and business power are going to amount to much for a long, long time. Some day the fact that you're the Lansing heiress might trouble me a little—I might worry about people calling me a fortune-hunter—but now, that seems terribly unimportant. The only thing that seems important to me now is that you are the only girl I've ever really loved, and the only one I've ever wanted to marry! Could you forgive me for being a no-good so-and-so—and think about marrying me? That is, of course, if you'd like to."

"Oh, Ken!" she whispered, shakily, her hands going out to him in a little fluttering gesture, and meeting the

swift, ardent clasp of his own hands. "Oh, Ken, I love you so much! I've missed you so much!"

Ken's arms were about her now, holding her close and his lips were against her hair. For a long, long moment they clung together, just the blessedness of being close in each other's arms all either of them could ask or wish. It was a loveliness that wiped out the memory of hurt and doubt and suspicion, and gave them a peace that neither had ever hoped to know again.

Outside, there was the sudden strident, "O-o-o-o-o-o!" of the air raid alert, signaling the approach of an

enemy plane, or planes. Bringing with it the sharp, bitter knowledge that though hands and lips may cling, though hearts may sing with the joy of love, the hideous business of war goes on with its horror and desolation.

But Kendall and Taffy were so closely wrapped in the oblivion of their joy, of their newly discovered happiness, that neither of them even heard the air raid alarm. Just as, long after the bitterness, the horror, the useless agony and destruction of war is forgotten, love and singing hearts and clinging lips will go on, Life's supreme gift of ecstasy fulfilled.

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NEXT ISSUE

## COME BACK TO ME

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Judy had to admit that Mary Ann's act was certainly good

## Rings on Her Fingers

By TUGAR DE PASS

*Girl gym boss Judy has a fool-proof scheme to keep men in their places—until a red-headed Marine wants her to play chaperone!*

**J**UDY was five feet two and a half, and tipped the scales at exactly one hundred and ten pounds. Her corn-silk curls, cut short and tied back with a sky-blue ribbon, framed an impish little face with a tip-tilted nose, gold-flecked brown eyes, and a hint of a dimple in the chin. In brief, even in navy blue

shorts and a white gym shirt, Judy was the essence of appealing femininity.

And she had just thrown a hundred-and-sixty-pound Marine sergeant flat on his back!

The sergeant sat up, rubbing his dark red hair, and blinking his bright blue eyes.



"Well, I'll be a monkey's uncle!" he muttered, in a dazed voice.

Judy laughed. In the three years she had helped her brother Randy run the gymnasium, she had never more enjoyed giving a demonstration of judo than she had just now.

Sergeant Mike Darrow had strolled into the place half an hour ago, with a group of boys on furlough from Camp Calhoun. Judy had heard him tell old "Spike" Calahan on duty at the door that they all wanted to take the famous Stevens' gymnasium course in judo.

Never would she forget the expression on Mike Darrow's face when Spike had led them over to her!

"A girl," the sergeant had muttered in a strangled voice. He had turned to his companions, looking a little wild-eyed. "Look, fellows, we'd never live this down! Anyway, a little half-pint midget like this can't possibly handle a tough bunch of Marines. Let's go find some other gym."

"Suppose I give you a demonstration, Sergeant," Judy had cut in sweetly. "Then the boys can decide for themselves whether or not I can handle them."

Now the boys were all shouting with laughter, as they watched Mike get slowly to his feet.

"Oh, boy, wait until I tell the fellows at camp about *this*!" one of them yelled.

And another:

"You're out-voted, Mike! We're staying here!"

To Judy's relief, Sergeant Darrow had evidently decided to be a good sport. He grinned, and held out his hand.

"Shake, Miss Stevens. You're a better man than I am!"

AS JUDY put her right hand into his, she held up her left. On the fourth finger, above a perfectly enormous diamond, was a narrow wedding band. The diamond had cost a quarter, and the wedding band a dime. But there was no hint of that in Judy's voice as she said calmly:

"It's Mrs. Stephens, Sergeant—spelled S-t-e-p-h-e-n-s. Coincidence, isn't it? That I happened to marry a man with a name pronounced the same as my maiden name was, I mean."

Mike Darrow looked surprised, and yes, definitely a trifle disappointed. And,

oddly, Judy for the first time regretted a little that she had cooked up this particular scheme in order to persuade Randy to let her take over the management of the gym after he himself had gone into the Air Corps.

"You're crazy, Judy," Randy had said firmly, when she first suggested it. "Your working here with me to look after you was all right. But on your own"—he had shrugged his broad shoulders—"every wolf in uniform would be after you."

And so Judy suggested a pretended elopement with a soldier who had immediately been sent overseas.

"The wolves won't pay any attention to a married woman," she had pointed out to Randy.

She just *had* to persuade Randy. Training boys in judo was her best way of helping the war effort.

And finally Randy had given in. Not even old Pat Dalton and Spike Calahan, both of whom had worked for Randy for years, knew that there was really no such person as Captain Malcolm Stephens. Judy had chosen the Malcolm because it didn't sound like a made-up name, and the Stephens because she knew it was going to be hard enough to get used to the "Mrs." without having to remember an entirely new name as well.

And the plan had certainly worked, all right—worked a little too well, Judy was beginning to realize. Not once in three months since Randy had left had anyone asked her for a date. Funny, though, until today, she hadn't minded that much.

The first judo lesson over now, she stood a little to one side, watching the boys shrug into their coats. Watching, particularly, Sergeant Mike Darrow.

If it hadn't been for that darned wedding ring, she was almost sure Mike would have asked her for a date. She had done her best to counteract the effects of that ring by remarking casually that her husband was in North Africa, and how lonely it was to go home alone to her apartment every night.

After all, war brides weren't supposed to sit at home all the time. There was no reason why Mike couldn't have asked her to have dinner with him. On a purely friendly basis, of course.

She thought fleetingly of the lovely

new evening gown hanging in her closet. A gown of crisp black net, with a billowing star-spangled skirt and a sweetheart neckline, that set off to perfection the creamy tan of her skin and high-lighted her silver-gilt hair. Crazy, how desperately she wished Mike Darrow could see her in that ultra-feminine frock.

Suddenly, Judy's heart gave a little bounce of excitement. Mike had left the group abruptly, and was striding across to her!

"Look, Mrs. Stephens," he said. "I wonder—that is, I thought maybe—" He broke off, grinning. "Gosh, you'd think I'd never before asked a girl to have dinner with me! Will you, Mrs. Stephens—as a special favor? There's something I want to ask you and—well, it will take a little time to explain."

Judy's dimple danced. "Thank you, Sergeant, I'd be delighted," she said, not too hastily, she hoped. She gave him her address, and added, "About seven, shall we say?"

**S**HE was practically certain he had just tacked on that last sentence as an excuse.

Only he hadn't. Two hours later, leaning eagerly across a table for two at the Club Caribee, he was explaining, and Judy knew he hadn't even noticed the entrancing black net frock.

"Your mentioning this afternoon how lonely it was to go home alone to your apartment gave me the idea," he was saying. "You see, it's like this. Mary Ann—she's my girl back home in Cantonville, South Carolina—wants to come up to stay these two weeks I'll be in New York. But she's such a sweet, helpless little thing, her family won't hear of her staying alone at a hotel. Now, if I could tell them she was going to stay with a married friend of mine, I'm sure they'd let her come."

He paused, with an embarrassed little grin.

"Gosh," he said then, "I guess I've got my nerve even to suggest such a thing, but— Well, you know how it is when a fellow's in love and wants to see his girl."

"Of course," Judy murmured absently, wondering why in the world she should feel suddenly so completely sunk.

"Good heavens," she told herself ir-

ritably, "it's nothing to you that Mike Darrow happens to be in love! What if you have always had a weakness for that particular shade of dark red hair? What if you do feel a little breathless every time he looks at you with those Irish blue eyes? You've been such a stick-in-the-mud lately, any halfway attractive man could make you feel like that."

But in spite of all that mental argument, Judy knew that she wanted to go on seeing Mike, wanted to get to know him better. And to do that, of course, she would have to invite his precious Mary Ann to stay with her. Otherwise, Mike would be sure to find some other place for the girl to stay, and then *she* would see him only at the gym, which might as well be not at all.

"You look terribly upset," Mike's anxious voice broke into her thoughts. "Please—just forget the whole thing. I could kick myself for—"

"I'm not in the least upset!" Judy interrupted hastily, smiling at him, and offered the first explanation that popped into her head. "Your talking about your fiancée just reminded me of my husband, and how lonely I am without him. Of course, I'd love to have Mary Ann visit me, Mike."

She didn't realize she had used his first name, until he repeated softly:

"Mike—I'm so glad you decided to call me that. I've been wanting to call you Judy ever since I heard old Spike call you that this afternoon. It's exactly the right name for you, somehow, and—" He paused, frowning a little. "I don't know why it is, but Mrs. Stephens just sounds all wrong. Guess maybe it's because you don't look like my idea of a married woman."

"I don't feel much married, either," Judy said, before she stopped to think.

Mike gave her an odd look.

"Of course, you don't!" he said quickly, as though trying to explain that remark to himself as well as to her. "You just had two days with your husband, didn't you? And that's not long enough to get to feel really married." He leaned across the table and gave her hand a quick, hard squeeze. "Some day I'd like to meet that man of yours, Judy. He must be quite a guy to rate a girl like you."

It wasn't until just before she fell

asleep that night that Judy remembered that neither of them had again mentioned Mary Ann. They had danced, discovering with mutual delight that their steps matched perfectly, and they had talked. And, though dancing with Mike had been wonderful, listening to him talk in that deep, warm Southern voice of his was even more so.

BEFORE the evening had ended, Judy felt as though she had known Mike Darrow for years. She knew that Rudyard Kipling was his favorite poet, and broiled brook trout with tartar sauce his favorite food. She knew that he had played left end on his college football team, and that he had joined the Marines because that branch of the Service was always the first to see action.

"And the quicker we give them plenty of action, the quicker this war will be over," Mike had said.

"And after the war—what then?" Judy had asked softly. "For you, I mean, Mike."

He had grinned down at her.

"Back to Cantonville," he had told her. "Maybe you won't understand a fellow being willing to spend the rest of his life in a quiet little Southern town, but, the truth is, I like small town life." He had paused a moment, looking thoughtful. "You see, in a little place like Cantonville things aren't important, the way they are in a big city—things like wealth and position and property, I mean. Only people are important, and—well, I happen to like people. At least most of them!" He had ended with a chuckle.

Life in a small Southern town! Judy, who had been born and brought up here in New York, had found herself suddenly wondering what it was like. Since the death of both parents when she was sixteen, she had lived with her brother Randy in one dingy boarding house after another, until Randy's gym finally had become a success and they had taken the small apartment where she now lived alone. With a background like that, she couldn't even imagine what life would be like in a quiet, peaceful little Southern town.

"Well," Mike had said, when she asked, "to me it's riding through pine-scented woodlands, playing golf and tennis once or twice a week, going as a

matter of course to the Saturday night dance at the country club, and meeting all your friends there. It's working hard all day, and liking it, and walking home late in the evening along an oak-shaded street to an old Colonial house, with tulips planted along the flagstone walk and wistaria shading the brick terrace." With an embarrassed little laugh, he had added, "I sound like a sentimental idiot!"

Remembering those words now, Judy's heart gave a little bounce of excitement. Even then he hadn't mentioned Mary Ann! Surely, if he really and truly loved the girl, he would have said, "Going home to Mary Ann," not just to an old Colonial house.

Judy fell asleep with a smile on her lips, and dreamed that she was sitting on the wistaria-shaded terrace Mike had described, watching Mike himself walk toward her up the flagstone walk. She wore a blue-checked pinafore, with wide white organdy ruffles across the shoulders, and she was slicing apples into a bright blue bowl on her lap.

And then Mike was bending over her, dropping a light, husbandly kiss on her cheek, and saying:

"Umm, apple pie for dinner, I'll bet!"

"What crazy things dreams are!"

Judy thought, as she bounced out of bed the next morning. You'd think she was actually in love with the man, actually wanted to marry him and go bury herself in a stuffy little Southern town.

But, by the time she was seated on the bus, on her way to the gym, that thought was no longer even remotely amusing. In fact, long before she had buttoned the last of the row of white pearl buttons down the front of her trim little navy blue linen frock Judy, with characteristic honesty, had admitted to herself that it was all too true. She *was* in love with Mike Darrow, and she *did* want to marry him—more than she'd ever wanted anything in all her life before.

AND a swell chance there was of that wish ever being granted! With Mike in love with another girl, and, anyway, thinking *she* was married.

Well, at least she could tell him the truth about that. Or could she? Dismally, Judy shook her head. No. Mike had told her quite frankly he was in love with Mary Ann Jarvis. Under those cir-

cumstances, such a confession from her would be an open admission of her own feelings for him. And the last thing in the world she wanted was Mike feeling sorry for her.

At the gym a little later, when Mike dashed up to her, waving a yellow telegram, his face radiant, the faint hope to which Judy had clung in spite of everything, the hope that he *might* not be deeply in love with Mary Ann, just curled up and died. Just because he hadn't talked about her last night didn't mean a thing. Evidently he hadn't forgotten her for a single moment.

"I called her long distance last night," he was saying jubilantly, his words practically tumbling over each other, "and she caught a late train! She'll be here at six-thirty! You can go with me to meet her, can't you, Judy?"

Judy bungled several perfectly simple judo tricks that day, and more than once found herself instead of her pupil flat on the floor. So, all in all, she was feeling thoroughly irritable by the time she and Mike arrived at the station, a good twenty minutes ahead of train time.

"She's such a helpless little innocent, she'd be frightened to death if we weren't right here to meet her," Mike explained. Then he gave Judy a worried glance. "You'll take good care of her, won't you? When I'm not around, I mean?"

"Of course," Judy murmured, wondering briefly if a dash of arsenic in Mary Ann's morning coffee could possibly come under the head of taking good care of her.

And that arsenic idea became more intriguing than ever when the train finally arrived half an hour late, and Mike introduced her to Mary Ann. Judy had never seen a girl she disliked more on sight.

"Helpless, my eye!" thought Judy. "She's just about as helpless as Hitler!"

Oh, how could Mike be such a fool! True, Mary Ann had enormous blue eyes and a round little chin, but there was a cold, calculating gleam in those eyes, and a firmness to the chin that spoke volumes.

Judy had to admit, though, that Mary Ann's act was certainly good. All the way back to the apartment, with Mike sitting between them, with Judy feeling

definitely like a fifth wheel, Mary Ann clung to Mike's arm. She gazed with childlike wonder out the window of the taxi.

"Such tall, tall buildings!" she trilled, just as though she had never seen even a picture of a skyscraper. "They make little me feel like a teeny-weeny midget."

Then she took off the smart little brown straw sailor she was wearing, and snuggled her red-gold head against Mike's shoulder.

"I think I'd be really frightened, if you weren't here in this great big old place with me, Mike," she said softly.

Over her head, Mike gave Judy an embarrassed glance.

"Oh, don't mind me," Judy told him wryly. "I'm just an old married woman."

Mary Ann sat up abruptly, and widened her eyes at Judy.

"How too, too awful of me! I just forgot all about you, Judy. You don't mind if I call you Judy, do you?" Not waiting for an answer, she fluttered her lashes up at Mike, and cooed, "I'm just so happy to be with my great big man again! Honestly, I've just about died of loneliness!"

"I'll bet you have!" thought Judy. Somehow, she just couldn't picture Mary Ann being content to sit at home night after night.

**W**ELL, she had definitely had just about all she could take of Mary Ann for the first dose. So as soon as they reached the apartment, she pleaded a headache, and disappeared into the bedroom.

But evidently she wasn't to be let off so easily. For she had just slipped out of the navy linen and into comfortable old lounging pajamas of faded rose crepe when Mary Ann joined her.

"Mike says I must rest after my long trip," Mary Ann pouted. "Darn him! I wanted to make a round of some of the smart cocktail places before dinner, and—" Her voice trailed off, as her eyes abruptly narrowed. "I'm going to do it, too! I'll just go by myself. Mike isn't calling for me until eight, and I'll be back long before that."

"But, Mary Ann, Mike won't like that at all!" Judy said sharply. "Of course, girls do go to those places alone, but . . . Well, as you probably know, Mike's

rather old-fashioned in his ideas."

"I'll say he is!" Mary Ann nodded emphatically. "But"—she gave Judy a shrewd glance—"what Mike doesn't know won't hurt him. And he won't know about this unless you tell him."

"It's none of my business, of course," Judy told her coldly.

Evidently, it had not even occurred to Mary Ann to suggest that she go along. Not that she wanted to, but for Mike's sake, she would have gone.

Mary Ann had scrambled out of the smart brown shantung traveling suit, letting it lie where it fell at her feet, and was slipping into one of the smartest frocks Judy had ever seen. A frock of smoke-gray chiffon, with a froth of white lace around the deep, square neckline, a frock that fairly shrieked a price tag of three figures.

"I didn't know you could buy clothes like that in small Southern towns," Judy said slowly.

Carefully adjusting a small nosegay of a hat on her gleaming curls, Mary Ann gave an amused little laugh.

"You can't. I get all my clothes from Lakes' Fifth Avenue shop—shopping service, you know. But"—she laughed again—"I'm afraid Mike's going to get a little shock when he sees the bills."

"Mike?" Judy repeated, in a stunned voice.

"Oh, after we're married, of course." Mary Ann shrugged.

"But good grief!" Judy exclaimed. "Mike can't afford clothes from Lakes' for his wife! Not on a sergeant's pay, he can't!"

The selfish, stupid little fool!

But evidently Mary Ann wasn't quite as stupid as Judy had thought.

"But, darling," she was saying calmly, "I thought, of course, you knew! Mike's one of the wealthiest men in Cantonville. His family's practically owned the town for generations, and since his father died, Mike practically owns it. Cotton mills, you know," she ended absently.

No, definitely, Mary Ann was anything but stupid, Judy decided, after Mary Ann herself had finally whirled out of the apartment. It was all too clear now! From the first, she had wondered what on earth a girl like Mary Ann could possibly see in big, quiet-spoken, serious-thinking Mike.

But she no longer wondered about that. Mary Ann wouldn't have cared if Mike had been cross-eyed and had a wooden leg. All she cared about was his money.

**S**UDDENLY, out of a clear sky, Judy had a wonderful inspiration. If it was big money game Mary Ann was after, why shouldn't she, Judy, put her on the scent of someone bigger than Mike—where money was concerned.

The next moment Judy was at the telephone, dialing frantically, one call after another.

"A little party for a charming young friend of mine from the South," she said to each. "Tomorrow afternoon at six."

When she finally hung up after the tenth call, she ticked off on her fingers the people she had called.

"Phil Layton, fat and fortyish, but rolling in wealth. Stan Compton, spoiled mamma's boy, but ditto. Lance Carewe, the perennial playboy, the columnists called him, but also ditto."

Those were the three who counted. The others had been invited merely to furnish background.

Judy laughed. All three men probably thought her a little crazy. She had met them only in a casual businesslike way, when they had been at the gym for workouts. But she didn't care two cents what they thought of her. The important thing was what they would think of Mary Ann's fragile loveliness, and what Mary Ann would think of them!

Oh, it was going to work—she was just sure of it! Judy broke into a mad-cap little dance, flinging her arms wildly.

But she stopped abruptly, as her eyes fell on the little blue enamel clock on the side table. Good gosh! A quarter of eight! Mike would be here any moment, and somehow Judy knew that he would be simply furious with her for allowing Mary Ann to go out alone, not with Mary Ann for going.

She let out a long sigh of relief, as Mary Ann, using the key she had given her, threw open the door at just that moment.

"Well, it's about time!" Judy said sharply.

"Don't be stuffy, Judy." Mary Ann

laughed. "I made it, didn't I?" She took off the little flower-decked hat, and slung it carelessly through the open door of the bedroom. "What fun I've had! I met the most marvelous man!"

"Oh, you did, did you?" Judy fought desperately to control her rising fury. "And how, may I ask, did you meet this marvelous man?"

Mary Ann widened her eyes.

"Oh, you know. The place was crowded, and he just happened to sit at my table and we got to talking. But it's perfectly all right, Judy." She gave Judy a warm, reassuring smile. "He's a friend of yours. I found that out when I mentioned I was staying with you. His name's Stan Compton, and—"

"Stan Compton!" Judy broke in incredulously.

Talk about coincidence! Stan must have gone out just after she had talked to him and, of all things, had run into Mary Ann.

Judy found herself laughing helplessly. She certainly had gone to a lot of trouble for nothing, apparently. Mary Ann was perfectly capable of going out and ambushing her own big game! But probably the party would be a help. Stan Compton wouldn't be apt to follow up a chance meeting like this.

"I was just surprised," she said hastily, in answer to Mary Ann's questioning look. "You see, I'm having a little party for you tomorrow afternoon, and Stan is one of the people I invited."

"Oh, yes, Stan told me," Mary Ann murmured absently, turning to the wall mirror and fluffing out her red-gold curls. "I think it's just too, too sweet of you, Judy."

"What's just too, too sweet of Judy?" Mike's amused voice asked from the doorway.

**E**VIDENTLY, Mary Ann had failed to close the door properly. Hearing their voices, he had just walked in.

Judy managed a little little laugh. Darn it, why did her heart have to start racing like mad every time she saw the man?

"It's nothing," she said, and went on to tell him about the party.

"But you really shouldn't have bothered," Mike frowned. "Mary Ann and I would much rather just be alone together."

"Darling!" Mary Ann ran prettily across the room, and gave him a playful little shake. "Where are your manners? Of course, we'd rather be alone. But when Judy's gone to all this trouble—"

"Sorry, Judy." Mike grinned at her. "I guess that was pretty rude of me. Of course, we'll enjoy the party, Mary Ann and I both."

"I could call it off," Judy said slowly.

"Oh, no!" Mary Ann shook her head firmly. "I'm dying to meet all your friends, Judy." She gave Judy a mischievous smile, which said, "Especially if you have any more like Stan Compton."

So late that night, while Mary Ann got ready for bed, after her date with Mike, Judy took pains to tell her in detail about the other two "friends." By the time she had finished describing the huge Layton Oil Company, and the Carewe Textile Factory, Mary Ann's eyes were wide.

"My!" she breathed. "It must be terribly exciting knowing rich, important people like that. I suppose," she added casually, "Stan Compton's rich, too? Somehow, I got that impression this afternoon."

"Oh, simply rolling," Judy told her happily. And added innocently, "He'd certainly make some girl a good husband, because, besides being wealthy, he's deferred. Some essential job in the family munitions plant, I believe."

She had her own ideas about just how essential that job of Stan's was, but Mary Ann wouldn't be interested in that.

From Judy's point of view, that party the next afternoon was a simply marvelous success—much more so than she'd even dared hope. For, at the last minute, Mike had called to say he couldn't come. Mary Ann had been taking a shower at the time, so Judy had taken the message.

"We've just had orders to report back to camp tonight," Mike had told her. "I hope"—he had added that slowly—"it's nothing important, and they'll send us back tomorrow to finish our judo training with you. Anyway, tell Mary Ann I'll either call her tomorrow or write."

And so, with Mike not there, Mary Ann had a clear field at the party. Watching closely, it was plain to Judy that of her three candidates—though



they all showed signs of being attracted to Mary Ann—it was Stan Compton who had the inside track. She couldn't much blame Mary Ann. For Stan, at least, was young and even handsome, in a boyish way.

So when the last guest had departed, Judy was not in the least surprised to find that Mary Ann had accepted Stan's invitation to dine with him that night. Funny, though, Judy thought worriedly, she wasn't nearly as happy over the obvious success of her scheming as she ought to be.

She kept thinking about Mike's message—"Orders to report back to camp." That might mean almost anything. And no matter how unworthy Mary Ann was of Mike's love, the fact remained that Mike *did* love her.

Judy couldn't doubt that for a moment. She had been hoping, of course, that if Mary Ann should break her engagement to Mike because of Stan Compton, Mike might then turn to Judy Stevens.

**B**UT now with Mike gone—maybe for good—and still thinking her married, everything was different. Judy shivered. Suppose she never saw Mike again! Even if Mary Ann eloped with Stan this very night, it wouldn't do *her* a bit of good.

How could she possibly write a man and say, "I was just fooling. I'm not married. So, please, won't you fall in love with me?"

Saying something like that—not the "fall in love with me" part, of course—would have been hard enough, since Mike was too smart not to realize that confessing her carefully-guarded little secret to him could only mean that she loved him.

Writing it, without a chance of making it sound casual and unimportant, was simply impossible.

Judy had never been so completely miserable in all her life as she was that next day after the party. She stayed home from the gym, pretending she didn't feel well, so she would be sure to be there if Mike called.

And a good thing she did, too, she told herself bitterly. For Mary Ann had gone blithely out to lunch with Stan. Judy didn't know whether she was glad or sorry about that. She hated the

thought of Mike being disappointed, if those orders meant what she thought they meant. On the other hand, since Mary Ann wasn't here, Mike would have to talk to her, Judy.

Only it began to look as though Mike wasn't going to call at all.

Seven o'clock—eight—eight-thirty, and still no call. No Mary Ann, either.

Judy paced the living room, crumpled blue slacks flapping about her ankles. She was so nervous and worried that when the phone finally rang at a quarter of nine she almost fell over a chair getting to it.

"Hello!" she practically shouted in her excitement.

"Hey, I'm not deaf!" Mike laughed. It was an oddly taut little laugh, though, and Judy almost held her breath as he went on swiftly:

"Listen, Judy, I can't explain, but I think you'll understand. I've got just an overnight leave, and I don't want to waste a minute of it. Tell Mary Ann to meet me in the lobby of the Hotel Maxton just as soon as she can make it."

Judy drew a deep tortured breath. Yes, she understood, all right.

"I'll tell her, Mike," she said.

Somehow, she had to locate Mary Ann, persuade her to go to Mike. What happened to Judy Stevens wasn't important now. Mike—Mike on his last night leave before going into heaven-only-knew what dangers, Mike waiting confidently for the girl he loved—that was all that mattered.

Locating Mary Ann was not difficult. Judy just began calling all the smartest night clubs, and found her at the third. But persuading Mary Ann to leave Stan Compton and go to Mike was a different matter.

"Don't be silly, Judy," she said irritably. "Can I help it if Mike chooses to turn up unexpectedly like this? You know perfectly well Stan would never forgive me for walking out on him." And she hung up with a bang.

Slowly Judy, too, hung up, her thoughts whirling.

And the next thing she knew she was in the bedroom scrambling out of the blue slacks and into her most becoming evening gown—a white silk jersey with a wide, poppy-red set-in girdle.

In a matter of minutes she was outside on the sidewalk, hailing a taxi. She

simply was not going to let Mary Ann do this to Mike! Maybe it was just delaying the inevitable—delaying it, too, until it could not possibly benefit *her* in any way—but this last night was going to be as perfect for Mike as she could possibly make it.

And so, a little later, she was saying to Mike:

"She hates it terribly, Mike. It was all the doctor could do to prevent her getting out of bed and coming anyway." With a shaky little smile, she added, "But she didn't want you to spend the evening alone, so she asked me to meet you in her place. She—she said to tell you she'd be thinking of you every minute."

"But"—Mike's brows drew together in a worried little frown—"if she's not very sick, as you say, why can't I go spend the evening with her at the apartment?"

"Well, you see, the doctor's a little afraid it might be—er—mumps," Judy said hastily. And added lamely, "Contagious, you know."

"Oh—I see." Mike gave her a long, thoughtful glance. Then abruptly he grinned. "Well, in that case, I'm on your hands, Mrs. Stephens. Where would you like to go?"

Judy thought swiftly. She had located Mary Ann at the Silver Door, so they certainly wouldn't go there.

"What about the Club Caribe again?" she suggested.

And what a smart suggestion that turned out to be! For the very first person she saw when she and Mike walked into the long, palm-decked club room was Mary Ann herself. Mary Ann looking radiant and smart in the black corded silk she had worn to lunch, and which now, with the jacket removed, had miraculously become a short-skirted dinner gown. Mary Ann smiling intimately across a table at Stan Compton.

"Mike—" Judy swung around, hoping desperately Mike had not seen those two. "Mike, let's—"

But her voice trailed off. For one glance at Mike's face was enough to tell her she was too late.

Mike's mouth was a grim tight line, his eyes steely.

"Excuse me, Judy," he muttered, and strode away.

Fascinated, Judy watched as he prac-

tically yanked Mary Ann to her feet and marched her out of a side door onto the roof-top terrace. Looking thoroughly bewildered, Stan Compton got hastily to his feet, then slowly sat down again.

Judy's heart began to race like mad. She had done her best to keep Mike from finding out about Mary Ann. But now that he had found out anyway—well, figuratively speaking, she was certainly going to be on hand to furnish a convenient shoulder on which Mike could weep.

She followed a waiter to a nearby table, sat down and ordered a highball. As she sipped it, her eyes kept going from Stan, looking more bewildered by the moment, to the side door through which Mike and Mary Ann had disappeared.

But by the time Judy had finished the highball, she was beginning to feel a little bewildered herself. It was certainly taking Mike long enough to give Mary Ann the dressing down she deserved. But then, she reminded herself, Mike was not the sort to do anything halfway.

**J**UST then she saw Stan get up abruptly and hurry out onto the terrace. He was gone only a few minutes before he returned, looking almost comically surprised. In a dazed fashion, he paid his bill and walked slowly out of the front entrance of the club.

It was only then that Judy remembered there was another door from the terrace opening into the small entrance hall. So that was why Stan had looked so surprised! Probably Mike and Mary Ann had used that other door long ago, and left together.

Thank heavens she had enough money in her evening bag to pay for the drink she had ordered! Her cheeks flaming and her heart a cold, aching lump in her breast, Judy walked as nonchalantly as she could past that terrace doorway, pausing a moment to glance out. As she had suspected, the terrace was deserted.

Back in her apartment half an hour later, Judy realized dully that there was only one way to explain Mike's behavior. Mary Ann had somehow managed to put her, Judy, in the wrong, and had made up with Mike.

She could almost hear Mary Ann say-

ing, in that childish, plaintive little voice of hers:

"But, Mike, of course, I would have met you if I'd known! I just can't understand Judy doing such a mean thing. She could easily have located me and given me your message. She knew perfectly well I didn't want to go out with Stan Compton, anyway, that I just did it because he was a friend of hers!"

Yes, faced with a showdown, and not being quite sure of Stan yet, Mary Ann would undoubtedly do all in her power to avoid a break with Mike.

So Judy was not really surprised when Mary Ann called the apartment half an hour later, her voice bubbling over with excitement.

"Judy, darling, I'm calling to tell you good-by," Mary Ann said. "I'm going to be married! Isn't it too, too thrilling! We're driving up to Connecticut in a few minutes, and Judy, about my clothes—I'll write you later where to send them."

"So you talked yourself out of a tight spot, did you?" Judy asked dully.

Mary Ann laughed. "Of course. I'll admit I was a bit frightened there for a moment, but everything straightened out in no time. Mike's so sweet and understanding!"

Sweet and understanding, Judy thought bitterly, as she hung up in the middle of Mary Ann's effusive "Good-by and thanks for everything!"

Blind as a bat would be more like it! How could he let a silly, empty-headed little flirt like Mary Ann twist him around her little finger like that?

"Darn her!" Judy muttered furiously. "Darn him, too!"

She picked up a book and hurled it across the room. It landed with a thump against the door, just as a loud knock sounded on the other side.

"Go away!" Judy shouted. Whoever it was, she certainly didn't want to see them.

But she changed her mind about that in short order. For, incredibly, it was Mike's voice, quite as furious as her own, which shouted back:

"All right! I will, if that's the way you feel about it!"

JUDY jerked open the door, prepared to tell him exactly what she thought of him. Probably Mary Ann had

changed her mind and decided to stop by for her clothes after all. Well, that was fine, that was just dandy. She would also tell Mary Ann exactly what she thought of *her*!

But, at the sight of Mike's face, she took a hasty step back into the room, and all the furious words on the tip of her tongue were forgotten. For Mike didn't look at all angry the way his voice had sounded.

He looked—well, all sort of mixed up, the way she was suddenly feeling herself. But mostly he looked just plain unhappy.

Mike closed the door firmly behind him and, for the first time, Judy realized that he was alone.

"Wh-where's Mary Ann?" she stammered, casting a wild glance around, as though she expected a red-gold head to pop up from behind the sofa or some place.

"Didn't you know?" Mike looked surprised. "She said she was going to telephone you. Mary Ann"—he gave a wry grin—"is off getting herself married to the Compton millions."

"Oh!" Judy sat down abruptly on the nearest chair. "So"—she swallowed hard—"that's why you look so unhappy."

"It is not!" Mike gave a brief, taut laugh. "In fact, the whole operation was practically painless—finding out Mary Ann was two-timing me all over the place, I mean. You see, I guess I've suspected that for some time, and—well, when you told me tonight she couldn't meet me because she had the mumps, I was pretty sure something was not according to Hoyle some place. Because it so happens that Mary Ann and I had the mumps at the same time when we were kids."

"I didn't question you, though, because"—he shrugged—"well, because all of a sudden I realized I'd much rather spend the evening with you than Mary Ann, anyway." He paused and glared at her, then ended explosively, "I can certainly pick 'em, all right! First an empty-headed little flirt, and then a married woman!"

"Oh, Mike!" Judy breathed. "Oh, Mike!" She jumped up and flung her arms around his neck. "I could kiss you for saying that!"

And, with no more ado about it, she

was kissing him, kissing him as thoroughly as any man was ever kissed. And, after a brief, startled moment, Mike was kissing her.

But not for long. With a furious snort, he was shoving her away, his fingers biting into her shoulders, as he shook her until her teeth rattled.

"So you're just like all the rest!" he shouted. "Your husband off risking his life for you, and you go around kissing a man like that just because he's dope enough to fall in love with you! Well, thank heavens, I'm where I won't have another two-timing female for a long time!"

He swung around and started for the door.

Only he never reached it. Not for nothing was Judy an expert in judo. With a movement as swift as lightning, she caught Mike's wrist—

And there was Mike, flat on his back, with Judy sitting on his chest.

"Now you just listen to me, Mike Darrow!" she said furiously. "I—am—not—married! Here, look!" She tore off the two cheap rings and thrust them under his nose. "Woolworth specials, both of them!"

Scarcely stopping to catch a breath, she rushed on to explain. But long before she had finished, somehow, she was no longer sitting on Mike's chest. Instead, Mike was sitting up, and she was cradled in his arms, and Mike's lips were pressed hard against hers.

And Judy knew that, no matter how many years they lived together in that old Colonial house, there would never be another kiss quite like this one. A kiss wiping out all misunderstanding, a kiss sealing their love, binding them forever close. Although an ocean would soon be between them, nothing—not time nor distance nor danger nor heart-ache—would ever really separate them again.

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"It's hardly worth mending," she advised, when she saw the pendant



*Isobel could glue most anything together—except the fragments of her own shattered romance!*

## Mend My Heart

By MARIA MORAVSKY

ISOBEL looked with weary disgust at the counter of the ex-hot-dog stand which was now her mending shop on Tamiami Trail. It was littered with scraps of ivory, mother-of-pearl, odd china, and other traces of a refined junkery.

She was tired of gluing together the knick-knacks people brought to her to repair, tired of drilling and wiring antique vases, and soldering the broken-off paws of iron lawn dogs. Her shiny hair, brown like a polished coconut shell, stuck to her neck, and perspiration

stood in small beads under her blue eyes.

She held in her small, capable hands a porcelain bride with a broken bouquet. She was trying to glue onto it a tiny gilded rose, when out of the corner of her eyes she saw a tall service man.

"Mend my heart, please," he said, suppressed laughter in his voice.

At any other time Isobel might have found that deep baritone pleasing. But not today. Another of those idle, wise-cracking service men who littered Miami streets on Saturdays, she thought.

"Scram, soldier!" she said, in mild rebuke.

"Look here, young lady! Aren't you a mender?"

He pointed to her sign, a huge bronze teapot swaying in the everlasting Florida breeze. It bore the words:

#### WE MEND EVERYTHING!

The man placed a broken heart-shaped pendant on the counter. So he was a legitimate customer, not a masher. Isobel reached for the tube of liquid cement, then reconsidered.

"IT'S hardly worth mending," she advised. "It will cost fifty cents, and it's glass."

"I know, but it's a keepsake. My fiancée wore it."

Only now Isobel faced him. The keen blue-gray eyes she looked into were clear and intelligent, confirming the impression given by the wide brows, straight nose, and well-outlined mouth. Only the short clipped hair was a contrast to this conservatively handsome face. It was gold—the bright, extravagant hue of a new gilt frame.

"The Army gets the nicest men," she thought, but said aloud:

"You'll have to leave it here for twenty-four hours, until the cement hardens."

She handed him a receipt, and he left reluctantly.

Next day, around noon, he was at the stand again.

"Good morning, Miss Mender. Is my heart ready?"

"Good morning. I'm sorry. I told you it would take—"

"I know. Twenty-four hours. But there are only five days of my furlough left. Can you hurry the drying?"

She spread her hands in a helpless gesture as, with an easy spring, he sat on the counter.

There was a tinkle. A figurine fell to the cement floor. Angrily Isobel gathered the pieces of the shattered porcelain bride.

"Look what you've done!"

He offered to pay for repairing it, or to buy a new one. He looked so disconsolate that she was sorry for him.

"Please have lunch with me," he begged. "Then we'll go and try to duplicate the bride. You close at lunch time, don't you?"

"How do you know?"

"Oh, I've passed by several times. You must go out and eat, so we may as well go together. My name is Eric Landor, and I'm quite respectable."

She nodded with pleasure. For weeks she hadn't been out for lunch. When she let down those heavy shutters and hung out the "Out For Lunch" sign, it was just to rest and munch a sandwich.

They lunched at the Exotic Gardens. The colored fountains murmured of peace. Palm fronds shaded the glass tables, with flower vases under their translucent tops. Isobel felt light-hearted, and open for confidences.

So when he asked, "How did you happen to open a mending shop?" she told him not only about the immediate need for supporting herself, after her mother died, but also the deeper reason.

"Since I was a child," she explained, "I've hated to see things broken. I used to cry over a broken toy as if it were alive, and hurt. By the time I was nineteen I felt that way about all broken things. They represented human efforts. There was a part of someone hurt in everything wantonly thrown away. I humanized all wrecked things. When our house was being sold at auction—it was too large for me to keep, and I couldn't afford it after Mother died—I saw tools which could have been fixed, furniture which could have been repaired, all kinds of things which could have been reclaimed, go into a junk heap. I felt as if those things had died, too.

"I resented the waste. I couldn't open a car repair or a furniture restoring workshop, so I spent the proceeds from that auction on this gadgets' clinic. Those wounded keepsakes hold parts of



their owners' hearts, as your pendant does."

Suddenly embarrassed because she had been talking so much about herself, she lowered her eyes to her plate. She did not see his look of warm sympathy and admiration.

"You know," he said eagerly, "it's much the same way with me. Only I feel it about growing things. That's why I bought a neglected vineyard in California."

"A vineyard? Tell me about it!"

"I'd rather show you."

He turned to the waitress who served them.

"Please," he said, "a pint of Landor's muscatel. Do you care for sweet wine, Isobel? I hope so, because I want to show you the label of my wineries."

Then it clicked. He had ordered Landor wine—and he was Eric Landor. So he *had* reclaimed that vineyard! Wonderful!

WHEN the bottle of dark wine made from luscious muscat grapes was placed on the table, she looked longingly at its colorful label. A row of lush grapevines led to a cozy red-roofed house.

"Do you like it?" he asked, pouring the wine.

"I love it!" she said, as she sipped dreamily. "Is that where she is waiting for you?" She read the address on the label. "Sunshine Valley?"

He started as if awakened from a reverie.

"Who? Oh, my fiancée. Yes."

"What kind of a girl is she?" Isobel asked, for she expected confidences in return for her own.

He closed his eyes and described tenderly:

"Her eyes are purple-blue like ripe muscats. Her cheeks rounded like a perfect grape. She is a clinging vine. I wouldn't want my women any other way." He smiled impudently.

"You Bluebeard!" she chaffed him lightly. "Since you are on furlough why aren't you with your fiancée?"

"Well, it takes a heck of a time to travel to California these days."

"I don't understand you," Isobel said flatly. "You treasure that little glass heart of hers, yet you don't rush to her the first chance you have."

He frowned. "Well, if you must know—we quarreled. That's why I smashed that pendant."

"And now you're sorry. Why don't you tell her so, Long Distance?"

"It's her turn to make the first move," he said callously.

The whole adventure was now definitely ruined for Isobel. She liked this man immensely, she confessed to herself. They had in common the love of reclaiming things. If she had the chance that girl had, she could love him deeply, and wait for him in that doll's house in a vineyard. She would tend it carefully, while he was away.

But all that was only a beautiful dream to Isobel, a girl who was tired of independence. Life forced her to be strong, but innately she was a clinging vine.

She realized that he probably had asked her out because he was trying to forget he had quarreled with his girl. It was flattering, in a way, that he had chosen her, but his wanting to run around with any other girl didn't say much for his loyalty.

"You're not eating your strawberry shortcake—just smashing it," he reproached her, smiling. "We should economize these days. The least you can do is give it to the sparrows."

Isobel lifted the turquoise blue Mexican plate and emptied the soggy pink remains of the mashed cake on the tiled floor of the *patio*. Out of nowhere, dozens of small birds swooped at it. For a while, she watched the sparrows, the red cardinals, and the bluejays feasting on her dessert. Then she stood up resolutely.

"Let's go. I have to reopen the shop."

He got up reluctantly.

"How about dinner with me?" he asked.

"Not today," she refused. She had to squelch an impulse which clamored for her to accept, to be with him as long as she could.

"Tomorrow?" he insisted.

"I'll let you know when you come for your heart," she said lightly.

"Aren't we going to shop for the bride I broke?" he asked, as they left the loveliness of the Exotic Gardens.

"All right," she said. "We can get a duplicate at the Gift Shoppe opposite my store."

BUT they could not, they discovered a little later.

"Sorry," the storekeeper, a tall blonde in a gray suit matching her shrewd eyes, said with a wry smile, "but we're out of brides."

"All right, Vic," Eric answered the blonde. "I suppose you do have difficulty replacing your gimcracks, with industry geared to war needs as it is."

So he knew the girl, Isobel thought. He seemed to be having no trouble finding girls to keep his mind off his own.

Vic rested her trim elbows on the counter and looked straight into Eric's eyes.

"I know, Eric. My shop is headed for the rocks. Please—"

He interrupted her with a sharp, "No!"

Jealously clutched Isobel's heart, and it came to her with explosive force that she actually was in love with Eric Lander! And he—well, there was the fiancée, then Isobel herself, and now Vic!

"Well, we'll let it go," Isobel said carelessly, starting to walk out of the store. "I'll try to patch the bride again. Good-by now, and thank you, Eric. I enjoyed the lunch."

"How about my heart?" he demanded. "It must be dry by now."

She nodded. They crossed the street, his warm hand guiding her. She was furious at herself, because of the way she thrilled to his touch.

He raised the heavy shutters from her stand's counter, and adjusted them against the hot afternoon sun—sunshine made even brighter by his own golden hair. After he had the shutters and everything ready, he asked, grinning:

"How about that dinner date?"

"No. I'm really busy." Her silken brown eyebrows drew together in a slight frown.

He shrugged his broad shoulders.

"All right, Sourpuss! I'll try again, tomorrow at moonrise."

"How do you know I'll be here?"

"I know your dark secret. You live at the back of the store."

"So what? I may be out."

"I'll take a chance."

"You'd better not. Here is your pendant."

She dismissed him with a sigh, even

forgetting to charge him for the repairs.

She started missing him as soon as he left. She tried to tell her lonesome heart how glad she was that she was independent, and doing well—much better than her rival across the street. People would rather restore old things these days, than buy new ones. She should devote all her time to her little business, instead of mooning over a man who never would have noticed her if he hadn't been trying to forget another girl.

Next day she saw him passing her store, and Victoria was with him. He called to Isobel gaily, and hesitated, as if about to stop, but she did not encourage him.

"I closed the shop early—no customers," she heard Vic saying. "Really why don't you—"

Again Isobel heard Vic begging for something, in a lowered voice, and again she heard Eric's, "No!"

"You heart-breaker!" Vic laughed hilariously, then Isobel could not hear any more.

"He's just looking for new fields to conquer," Isobel thought, though the thought was insufferable.

During the sleepless night, after a gloomy day, she tried hard to make herself believe that he could not be a trifle. With his deep love for things that needed rehabilitation, how could he break hearts? She must have him all wrong.

NEXT day, by moonrise, she could not forget what he had said about coming to see her then.

The full moon, rising redly, had a faint moonbow around it. The cool trade wind carried the fragrance of night-blooming jasmine. But it was lonely, for cars passed so rarely.

Isobel had almost given him up, when she heard the clapping of a horse's hoofs in front of her stand. She laughed, seeing the rig that drew up. And the driver was Eric.

"Good moonlight," he greeted her. "I hired this noble Dobbin. Will you take a buggy ride with me to the Seven Seas? They have fine chow there."

Desperately undecided, she couldn't answer at once, though her heart clamored to go with him. Her judgment,

however, told her to keep away from him, for he would forget her as easily as he had forgotten his fiancée.

"I see you need persuasion," he said, tying the horse to the bronze teapot sign.

He jumped over the counter and stood inside the shop, his eyes twinkling.

"So you decided to keep the store open, on a chance that I could come back to pay my fifty cents," he said solemnly, pushing the silver coin into the slot of a pink piggy bank. Then he faced her and asked with real seriousness: "Why do you dislike me?"

In the half-light, because of the dim-out, she sat down on a high stool, away from him, and said painfully:

"I'll tell you the truth. It's because—"

She told him then of what she had been thinking of him, though she did not mention Victoria.

"So that's it," he said gravely. "But—you don't really dislike me?"

Something inside her cried desperately, "I love you!" but aloud she said:

"I don't know."

"Let's find out."

He found the electric switch and turned off the few lights left. Now only the moon shone on the store's interior, silvering the knick-knacks and his bright hair. She waited, in thrilled expectancy, for his arms, unable to say a word in protest. Then they were around her, his lips had found hers in a kiss that was all the ecstasy she had dreamed it would be.

Shakily she freed herself from his arms, staggered toward the light button, and turned on the small light on the counter. The rosy gleam of the sea-shell lamp masked the flush on her cheeks.

"So you do like me!" he said triumphantly. "Let's go to dinner! Tomorrow, we'll clear up my reputation."

"How?" she asked hopefully.

He came closer, and looked earnestly into her eyes.

"I have no fiancée," he told her softly. "I've nobody in California, except my old cousin who manages my vineyards."

"Why, you described her to me!" cried Isobel.

"I described the vineyard. I love it, and I hated to leave it. If I had there a girl who loves restoring things to use-

fulness, someone to come back to—"

"But that keepsake!"

He laughed.

"Nobody gave me that heart you so conscientiously repaired. I bought it in Vic's shop and smashed it, to have an excuse to talk to you. I've watched you for some time, and knew how you dealt with mashers—and I'm no masher. I think we are pretty close, you and I, thinking of things the way we do. We should be close together—for keeps."

She wanted to believe him, to cling to him, but she had to know he was telling the truth, before she gave her heart into his keeping.

"I hope you're telling the truth," she said gently. "We'll know before long, I imagine. Now I'll dive into my den, change my clothes, and remake my face. In the meanwhile you let down the shutters."

THEY dined on the terrace of Seven Seas. The orchestra played tangos and the languid rhythm went straight to her heart that was swayed with such contradictory feelings. Had Eric told her the truth, or was she headed for a brief love that could only bring disaster to her heart? How about Victoria? She wished she knew, for she wanted to trust Eric, forever.

They danced, and with his gardenias pinned to her shoulder, his arms around her waist, it was all a blissful dream.

In the morning, when it was already humid with a foretaste of the day's heat, Eric came to her shop again, and asked her to go with him to the Gift Shoppe.

"Give that store another look!" she said, with a wry smile. "It's closed for good. See that 'For Rent' sign in the window?"

He looked dismayed.

"I'll find Vic!" he declared. "She'll tell you I bought that pendant there."

He headed across the street. In a few minutes, he returned, angry red spreading over his embarrassed face.

"No forwarding address," he said shortly, and as he saw the doubt in her blue eyes, he salutely mockingly. "Good day, doubting Thomasine. I have to hurry. I've only three days of my furlough left. I'll be seeing you."

With a twisted smile, he left her standing disconsolate outside her still shuttered counter.

The following two days were a nightmare. Isobel moved as if in a trance, answering her customers' demands to mend numerous useless knick-knacks, fix bulbs into shells. Her little business, of which she had been so proud, seemed of no account.

It was not only because he would not come again. It was the ad in the *Miami News* which she chanced to see the next day after they parted.

It read:

Vic, please communicate with me. It will be to your advantage.—HEART BREAKER.

Eric, in his colossal conceit was calling back Victoria, Isobel's jealous heart told her. Yet why shouldn't he be conceited? Hadn't she just about thrown herself at him, on a short acquaintance? She burned with shame at the memory.

The next day dragged even slower than the preceding ones. Isobel lingered in her stand well past moonlight, hoping Eric might pass by and stop. A girl in love, especially a despicable clinging vine like she was, had no self-respect, she thought.

When the moon touched the primly straight royal palm by her store, she saw him crossing the street. But he was not alone.

She waited with bated breath. She felt suffocated, and when finally she let out her arrested breath it was like a sob.

Victoria was with Eric. Even in the moonlight, she could never mistake that tall girl, with the abundant blonde hair.

They stopped at her counter. Did he mean to parade his conquest before her?

"My character witness," he said to Isobel smiling.

She hated him, yet could not help loving the way the moonbeams struck golden sparks in his hair.

"Tell my doubting Thomasine here what you know," he said to Vic.

"A few days ago," Vic said promptly, Lieutenant Landor came in and bought a pendant with a red heart, then went out and smashed it against a light pole."

Isobel smiled deprecatingly. He needn't have gone to all that trouble to explain a simple little purchase. She would have taken his word for that. What troubled her was Victoria.

WHAT was that girl saying now? She had to force herself to listen.

"You have a nice little business here," was what Vic was saying. "I'm looking for a place like this. But it's hard to find a stand like yours, with living quarters."

"Isobel," Eric said hurriedly, "why don't you let her have your shop?"

Isobel stared at him defiantly.

"Sell it to her?"

He stepped closer to the counter, so his eyes could look straight into hers.

"She pestered me for a long time to influence you to sell your place to her," he said. She could see the truth, if you couldn't—that I was desperately in love with you. She said that you would not need the shop after we were married."

"Why she called you a heart-breaker!" Isobel said wonderingly.

"She gave me that nickname after I broke that glass heart, to get a chance to talk to you. She knew, all the time, how the land laid—with me. How about you, Isobel? How does the land lie? Does it slope toward my little vineyard in Sunshine Valley?"

Victoria walked discreetly away, and Eric stepped still closer to the loaded counter separating him and Isobel. In the moonlight that burnished his hair, his eyes were pleading.

Isobel sighed, trembling. It was the sigh of trustful surrender. And as eagerly he leaned over the counter, and his lips met hers, contentment came—and ecstasy.

HARVEST FOR TWO, a Deeply Appealing Complete Novel of a Land Army Girl's Romance by MONA FARNSWORTH, Featured in the Winter Issue of Our Companion Magazine

## EXCITING LOVE

NOW ON SALE—10c EVERYWHERE



**I**T'S a season of glitter! It may not be necessarily gold, but you will definitely shine. Sequins, paillettes, jet and lavish embroidery on your night-life clothes are putting you in the limelight.

Your hair will sparkle with a jeweled ornament—your dress will twinkle enchantingly as you dance by—your long, elbow-length gloves will call attention to the chunky bracelets on your wrist. And you will be gay—with a ready smile and a tinkling laugh to bolster your man's morale!

But wait! Your face cannot look "undressed" compared to your glittering clothes! Live up to the lovely picture you've created and make up accordingly. Just before stepping out, give yourself a basic skin treatment to bring a charming, natural glow to your skin.

First wipe off all stale make-up and grime with a rich cleansing cream. In addition to a cleansing job, it helps lubricate the skin, leaving a delightfully fresh and fine-textured surface.

Then apply a thin film of cucumber emulsion over a second coating of cream. Massage into the skin thoroughly, using upward and outward strokes, circling each eye separately. Cucumber cream acts as a mild bleach, helping to combat that gradual darkening to which even young skins are subject.

Now you are ready for makeup. Use a foundation which will give you a protective and lasting finish. Powder carefully and paint your lips a bright color with one of the vivid new shades.

Ready for inspection? From the top of your head to the tip of your toes, you will be clean and shining. Not merely scrubbed with soap and water, but pampered and lovely, every inch of you scented with your particular fragrance—for his delight!

Need we say more?

#### Outdoor Fun

Some of the grandest parties are given outdoors. Plan something gay that fits the season, provide snacks that are simple and filling, and everyone will have a wonderful time!

You'll need a clear evening and plenty of snow. But if the weather man goes back on

you, let your friends know the party's on anyway, and that they're to wear indoor party clothes. Of course you'll want to play active games like:

**High and Low Snowball**—Players form two lines. Give each team a large snowball—or, if you play indoors, a ball of cotton, grapefruit, or large rubber ball. At a signal, each leader passes the ball over his head to the person behind him. Second person passes



it between his knees to the third, who hands it over his head to the fourth, and so on. When the last person in line receives the ball, he dashes up to the head of the line and the ball again travels alternately overhead and between knees. The game continues until the original leader returns to head the line. Team which finishes first wins a box of assorted candy balls.

**Sleigh Bell Huddle** is another hilarious

game. Give a ball to "it"—and away he dashes to hide it in a not-too-hard-to-find spot. After a few minutes, the others start to search for him. "It" jingles the bell from time to time. As each hunter finds the hiding place, he huddles in it, until all are packed in like sardines. The last one to find the spot is "it" for the next game. This game's fun indoors, too.

If a lively breeze is blowing, and you are outdoors, play *Paper Chase*. Scatter over the snow scraps of bright red paper which players must chase and catch. Chaser with the most scraps wins a waste-basket.

*Flying Snowballs* is a consequence game. Line up players in two teams facing each other. Several balls—these should be made of snow (outdoors) or cotton (indoors)—are kept going at a racy speed between them. Too bad if a player fails to catch a ball! He must pick it up and pay the penalty that's written on a slip inside the ball, such as imitate a siren, recite a poem, or whatever you want to dream up.

For a wintry buffet table, put blue cellophane over a white cloth, and have a centerpiece of blue and silver Christmas balls on silver-dusted leaves. Favors—miniature snowmen made of cotton, holding sticks of candy.

You'll want to serve hot and substantial food—hot, grilled sandwiches with chopped relish on toast. Oceans of steaming coffee. Baked apple turnovers—made the day before and reheated before serving—with hard sauce.

### Do You Walk In Beauty?

War work is hard on the feet and many of us are putting in long hours of unaccustomed walking in our efforts to bring a quick peace. Here are some soothing steps for foot and leg massage that will banish tell-tale signs of weariness induced by long hours of foot work.

Grasp the left ankle firmly with left hand, hold foot at instep with right hand and gently turn in a circular movement five times. Turn left foot outward to the left, when working on right foot turn outward to the right.

With thumb on top of toe, fingers underneath, massage each toe upward with rotary movement.

Sandwich toes between both hands, press base of left hand under ball of foot and smooth toes down with palm of right hand. Repeat three to five times.

Massage back of heel and ankle with rotary movement, using cushions of hands and fingers.

With thumbs on top of leg, fingers underneath, massage from ankle to knee with slow

circular motion using base of thumbs and cushions of fingers. Work gently over front of leg as it is most sensitive over the bone. Exert a little more pressure on the calf using cushions of fingers.

Massage calf of leg with kneading motion working upward. Use cushions of fingers in order to avoid pinching.

With thumbs on top of leg, fingers underneath, massage leg with wringing movement. Slide thumbs gently across front of leg.

Massage the knee vigorously.

Pour witch hazel on cotton and apply to foot and leg. Then wipe completely dry. Sprinkle dusting powder over foot, especially between the toes.

And then you'll walk as though you're dancing!

### Hair Care

More and more of us gals are carrying lunch boxes and wearing hats at work. In war factories the hair must be covered for safety. On street cars and trains and in ticket offices, the conductorette usually keeps her cap on her head as part of her uniform.

And so the care of the hair presents more problems. A hat, worn constantly, is hard on the hair. It encourages dryness and dandruff.

In factories, many girls with naturally curly hair have it cut short to avoid wearing a covering. Some girls have their locks bobbed before and after a permanent. There's lots of trouble in getting the hair short enough to keep within regulations and be on safety's side without sacrificing that all-important feminine look.

For the girl with fast-growing hair, a short permanent grows long far too soon. Fortunately, the visored cap of the war worker is becoming to most of us. In factories, your curls can be confined by a colorful turban or a bandana to match your blouse.

The longer the hair is confined, the more care it needs. Any gal who must wear a hat all day should brush her locks vigorously at night. Massage and some sort of scalp unguent are musts—if the head is to keep its lovely sheen.

During the hours away from work, wear your hair as free and loosely as possible and let the air blow through it as much as possible.

### Hairlines Make Headlines

While we're on the subject of hair—hairlines are making headlines these days. Your hair can be soft and fluffy, or smooth and sleek, long or short, curled or straight. Do what you will with it, if it is becoming, as



long as your hairline follows the 1944 "must" for a smart coiffure.

Most foreheads of average height look lovely with the hair brushed smoothly away at the front and sides. On the other hand, most girls don't have a beautiful hairline that is without irregular wisps at the back. But if one of your best points is a cunning, soft little-girl nape, then by all means show it. Brush your hair up and sideways off the back of your neck in a double French roll. Bring the front dip in a swirl or pompadour.

If a lovely widow's peak is your strong point, give it star billing in your coiffure. But here again, remember that with knife-slim clothes, the unrelieved high pompadour will make you look like a long drink of water. Interest must be pointed to the sides.

Here are some tips on bringing your hair line smartly to attention:

1. When you brush your hair, always brush it upward around the hairline. This gives a smooth, sleek line around the edges and makes your hair shine.

2. To keep the stray wisps from dropping down at the temples and in front of the ear, moisten the fingers lightly with soap and smooth the hair upward as a finishing touch.

3. Do not shave around your hair line. You will develop coarse bristles in contrast to your own soft hair. If you must eliminate ugly patches, use a good depilatory under the hands of an expert.

4. Take extreme care to blend your foundation and powder carefully into your hairline so as not to present an ugly mask appearance. For best results use a baby's hairbrush to blend the edges and brush excess out of the hair.

### Holiday Cake Recipes

Want two grand recipes for holiday cakes? Here they are:

#### SPICE SQUARES

4 eggs	2 tsps. baking powder
2 cups brown sugar	$\frac{3}{4}$ package pitted dates (chopped)
2 cups flour	$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. salt
1 tsp. ground cloves	2 cups chopped pecan nuts
1 tsp. cinnamon	
$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. allspice	

Beat eggs until light, add sugar, and beat again until smooth. Add spices, salt, flour, baking powder and chopped pecan nuts, and finally the chopped dates. Spread in greased hot cake tin to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch thickness. Bake in moderate oven (350° F.) until brown. While still hot, spread with icing made of 1 cupful of powdered sugar mixed with 1 teaspoonful of vanilla and 3 cupfuls of cream beaten together without cooking. Cut the cake into squares after icing.

#### LUCKY CAKE

2 squares unsweetened chocolate	1 tsp. vanilla
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter	$\frac{5}{8}$ cup flour
1 cup sugar	1 cup chopped pecan nuts
2 eggs	Few grains of salt

Cut the chocolate in small pieces and melt over hot water (not boiling). Cream the butter, add sugar, and when well mixed, add the melted chocolate. Add well-beaten eggs, flour and vanilla, nuts and salt. Put into a greased and lightly floured baking pan, flatten the surface of the batter with a spatula, and bake in a moderate oven for half an hour. Turn the cake out of the pan, and cut in squares while hot.

Dee-dic-cious!

### The Seventh Column

Does the Seventh Column live at your house? Carelessness is now known as the "7th Column" because it gives aid to our

Axis enemies—it causes fatal accidents and many serious injuries. You can do a lot to cut down this toll and here's how:

You shouldn't smoke in bed, but if you do, guard against falling asleep with a lighted cigarette in your hand.

Severe cuts are high on the list of "7th Column" accidents. Never keep sharp



knives in the same drawer with other kitchen utensils and gadgets.

Never touch a light switch when the body is wet—the wiring may be defective and the result may be fatal.

Disastrous fires are often caused by forgetting to disconnect the electric iron—always pull the plug out when you've finished ironing, even if your iron is equipped with an automatic switch.

The bathtub is one of the most dangerous spots in the house. If you want to avoid bad falls, guard against stepping on slippery soap and put a mat in the tub before taking a shower.

### Home Front Conservation

On the home front—it's conservation and more conservation without a grumble; rather, with joy in your heart that you have the power to conserve anything, everything needed by defense labor or made of priority materials.

For instance, take your manicure implements. These should be cherished like precious jewels if you want them to weather the war. If you want to keep in step with the times, follow these rules:

1. Put your implements away separately in a special case or cotton-lined box. Don't throw them in your cosmetic kit or toss them into your drawer. Sharp edges can be dulled or marred by contact with other objects.

2. When your nippers or scissors need sharpening, turn them over to a reliable grinder to do the job. Did you know that removing as little as a sixtieth of an inch from the blade can ruin your implement?

3. Now and then, put a drop of oil on scissors and nippers at the friction point.

4. Clean your implements regularly with an oily cloth to keep them free from rust.

Remember that cuticle scissors and cuticle nippers are designed for cutting only cuticles or small hangnails, while nail nippers and nail scissors are made to cut only fingernails or toenails. Keep them away from "Junior's" clutches—or yours, if you have some other purpose in mind.

Many broken bones have resulted from using an unstable stool when reaching for something. Be sure you are standing on something substantial.

Don't run the risk of scalding yourself by leaving the handles of saucepans on the stove sticking outward instead of inward. It's unpatriotic!

### Laundry Hints

It's awfully hard to get your laundry done as quickly and easily as in pre-war days, and you're probably "up a tree" wondering what to do about your dirty wash. You're probably finding that you have to use your linens longer than formerly. You can make the task an easier one by following these hints:

Do not let your underwear and other washable wearables, such as cotton or linen dresses and blouses, become too soiled. Rubbing to get off soiled spots and imbedded dirt is not only hard on the materials, but also hard on your hands. As soon as it becomes soiled-looking at all, wash it at once. Wash your underwear and stockings after each wearing.

Rayon fabrics require washing in temperate water, not hot water, and little soaking. Twenty minutes or half an hour is sufficient to soak them, and only colorfast materials should ever be soaked. Avoid rubbing, twisting, and wringing.

As for household linens, every night when washing your underclothes, also wash your face towel and wash cloth. Every few days wash your bath towel. Twice a week rinse out your pillow slips. Bed sheets? Stick 'em in the tub before they get too soiled.

As for tea towels, wash them in clean dishpan suds after each use. Use small wipeoff table mats instead of table cloths, and either small napkins that are as easily rinsed out as handkerchiefs, or you might even use paper napkins. Be more careful about not getting lipstick stains on your linens.

To wash your girdles, which I hope you'll do very often—never soak them. Wash them out at once, and if you want to rub them do it with a small, not stiff, brush. Stretch them gently and lay them flat in a towel to dry.

The cotton gloves you may be wearing all winter will respond to correct washing with a new beauty. They are simple to do—just rub them gently in warm suds and rinse thoroughly. Pull the fingers and lay them in a towel to dry.

Leather gloves are a chore. Don't wash them on your hands since leather is delicate. And use a soft brush to rub them. Press the moisture out in a towel after rinsing them. Rub gloves just before they are dry.

By adding this new cleanliness habit to your other new war-time habits, you'll have fewer laundering woes and you will not accumulate a big washing.

### Eat and Grow Thin

Have you ever read a list of reducing menus carefully? You may be surprised to find they recommend larger meals than you would eat normally. You may even have gained weight on less food than a reducing diet allows.

It's the choice of food you eat that takes off or adds pounds. Go through a calory table of foods and check up on your favorite dishes. One medium-sized potato will give you as many calories as two large heads of lettuce. If you add butter to your potatoes, count the butter, too. Two cups of spinach will threaten your figger less than one square of butter.

You can eat a large slice of lean beef and satisfy your hunger. You wouldn't have to worry half as much about gaining if you didn't add two tablespoons of mayonnaise to a salad. Shortcake is a temptation, but you could eat 60 stalks of fresh asparagus to gain its equivalent in calories. And the asparagus is much better for you.

If you want to reduce, cut out such foods as cream soups, fried meats, cheeses, cream, butter, puddings, pastries, candy, ice cream and cocoa. Select clear soups, lean meats, salads without dressings. Plenty of vegetables are wise, with the exception of fattening potatoes, peas and corn.

A slimming diet can be filling.

### It's Smart to Be Modest

No smart gal forgets that a pretty face and a trim figger can get her out of jobs as well as into them.

It may sound like something out of a Victorian copybook, but the first rule for holding a secretarial job is—be modest in appearance, in looks and in manner.

So if you find yourself one of the here-to-day-gone-tomorrow girls of the busiest time this country has ever seen, we have some useful tips for you.

Don't be a sweater girl.

Don't gild the lily in the office. Save the lipstick, the powder puff and the eyebrow pencil for the powder room.

Don't slink or slump on the job. Sit up. Be businesslike.

Don't get chummy with the boss. Keep your knees covered. He has seen knees before and wants to get on with his work.

#### How to Be a Pin-up Girl

When a man says "That's my kind of girl" he doesn't mean she has to be a Hedy Lamarr. After interviewing a number of service men, an authority gives us these requirements:

They like 'em clean looking, no fussy hair-dos, neat makeup job, no slip showing and stocking seams straight. They like her to wear sports clothes on an ordinary date. And they don't go for the "hard-to-get" girl on a last-minute date. Don't forget that most of the time our boys aren't sure that pass will come through.

They like to do the planning—they don't like a girl who takes the reins. Be fun, too, and sympathetic. And if you'd like to be his pin-up girl don't talk about other dates and don't flirt with other men when he's around.

#### Try This Test

Do you think you're well-groomed? Here's how to find out:

Open your closet door. Are your shoes in a bag, with trees to keep them in shape? Are your dresses hung neatly on hangers, or pulled out of shape by being hung up too hastily? Are any of their hems pinned up with safety pins? There doesn't happen to be a dress or two on the floor?

Look at the top of your dressing table. Is it littered with curlers and hairpins? Are the tops off your cosmetic jars? Has a comb been left with the hair still in it? Is there a soiled powder puff around?

Open your bureau drawer. Are neatly ironed undies laid in separate piles? Are your belts neatly rolled up in boxes? Your gloves carefully folded? Your hair trinkets in their special places? Or is everything more or less a scrambled heap?

Perhaps you can walk out of an untidy room looking as if you just stepped from a bandbox. But I'll bet you won't.

#### Household Hints

By using chalk to outline knitted mittens, sweaters, etc., on a window screen before laundering, they can be stretched to their original shape accurately and pinned with small nails while drying.

To avoid scouring and polishing the inside of an aluminum coffee maker, just drop a few apple peelings in the lower part, fill it with water and simmer for half an hour.

You'll be surprised how quickly broken glass can be picked up if a piece of fresh bread is wadded into a ball and used as a picker-upper.

#### The Road to Loveliness

Pretty is as pretty does and this is the way to do it! Cream your way along the road to loveliness and you'll find the words "dry skin" have vanished from your vocabulary.

Yours will be that dewy-eyed look if you smooth away tiny premature lines with a rich eye cream—pat it on ever so gently.

Your hands, madame, should not be overlooked! Keep them lily-white and soft with a fragrant, pearly hand cream.

Beautiful nails help to disguise not so attractive digits. Correct brittle, peeling, thin nails with rich nail cream.

#### The Bright Side

Cheerfulness tops the list of essentials for a charming, smiling personality. See the bright side instead of the gloom.

## Asthma Mucus Loosened First Day

### Sound Sleep Promoted

#### For Thousands of Sufferers

Do recurring attacks of Bronchial Asthma make you choke, strangle and gasp for breath? Are you bothered so bad some nights that you can't sleep? Do you cough and cough trying to raise thick strangling mucus, and strain so hard you fear rupture? Are some attacks so bad you feel weak, unable to work? Are you afraid of colds, exposure and certain foods?

No matter how long you have suffered or what you have tried, we believe there is good news and palliative hope for you in a splendid medicine which was originally a doctor's prescription but that is now available to sufferers at all drug stores under the name of Mendaco.

Mendaco usually works very rapidly because it con-

tains ingredients intended to help nature loosen thick, strangling excess mucus. And you know from your own experience if you can just raise that strangling phlegm you can sleep well, breathe deeply of God's fresh air and not feel like there was an iron band around your chest crushing out your very life.

#### Guaranteed Trial Offer

Mendaco is not a dope, smoke, injection or spray, but is in pleasant, tasteless tablets. Formula on every package. In fact, Mendaco has proved such a great palliative success for thousands suffering recurring choking, strangling symptoms of Bronchial Asthma that an iron clad guarantee insures an immediate refund of your money on return of empty package unless you are completely satisfied. Under this money back guarantee you have everything to gain and nothing to lose, so ask your druggist for Mendaco today and put it to the test. Only 60c.

## Mendaco



"You're good," Toni said, when the singer sat down with her and Brett

## *Sophisticated*

By SAM MERWIN, JR.

*Toni didn't like the label that Brett Whitman put on her, and when he asked for advice—that was too much!*

**T**ONI was scarcely surprised when tall, sandy-headed Brett Whitman came into her office and loomed over her desk, all six feet three of him. With the calm assurance of a realistic girl who had been aware of her attraction for men since her fourteenth birthday, she had sensed from

her first week on the job that he would be doing just this.

However, what he said was a surprise, what he said was.

"Miss Lindsay," he said awkwardly, "you look sophisticated."

"Really!" she said, and her tone was congealing.

What she felt like replying was, "And what do you mean by that crack?" She restrained a desire to put her hands to her beautifully groomed long-bobbed brown hair, a desire to dig her compact out of her bag and check her features in its mirror by the cold light of day.

A firm if silent, "No you don't!" kept her instincts in check. "I'm only twenty-four," she thought.

Back in Manhattan, she was still labeled "ingénue." Here in Reddington City, she was "sophisticated." It was, she decided, a base and bitter libel. She must, she realized then, have been staring at him. He had turned a faint shade of pink, and his fingers hovered around his knitted tie.

"Don't get me wrong," he said. "Please. I only meant that you looked as if you knew your way around. And I—well, I need advice."

That was the crowning blow. If she, Toni Lindsay, looked as if she'd been around—and that was all she could read into his statement—it was because big lugs like him had been dragging her to all places since she was in her early teens. It was lugs like him who had driven her to get out of Manhattan into this war-boom city to test her knowledge of design in a place where she was not known.

"With that approach, you certainly do," she said tartly.

It was worth it to watch his pink turn to a deep rose. He was, she thought irrelevantly and dangerously, rather a sweet baby. Probably, he was dying over the fact that his undoubted industrial abilities had kept him out of uniform. She discarded such thoughts quickly, slammed the door shut on them.

"I'm sorry," he said. "Really I am. I didn't mean to be rude. But I thought you might just be able to give me some advice. It's a rather personal problem. A young lady who sings, in fact."

"Which, I suppose, makes me Beatrice Fairfax," she said.

SHE did a silent count up to ten, feeling perilously close to losing her temper. And that didn't make sense.

"Shoot, Miss Lonelihearts," she said.

"The facts of the matter are," he said, pouncing on each word like a golf ball lost in the rough, "that I've been foolish. Or have I? I really don't know whether

Arlene—that's Miss Grey, she sings at the Copa—is what she seems to be or not."

"What you mean, Mr. Whitman," said Toni, and her voice was as dead and precise as a Soviet sniper's, "is that you want me to judge the little lady on the hoof and determine whether or not she is good enough for Mrs. Whitman's little boy? Am I right, Jasper?"

"You make it sound like a crime," he said, "but that's it." He hesitated again, unable to meet the level regard of her dark brown eyes. "I thought perhaps you'd let me take you to the Copa tonight and hear Arlene sing and perhaps talk to her between numbers."

"I take it you trust me to tell you whether she loves Brett Whitman or whether she's after the family moneybags, if any," said Toni.

It was just a little too much. For a moment, she wondered if it weren't a gag the boys in the other office had cooked up, if they weren't betting on whether or not she would go out with Brett Whitman.

Something about the very absurdity of the proposition tugged at her sense of humor. It was an ingenious approach, right to the old maternal instinct. She would go. If she dated anybody in this absurd war town, it might as well be Brett Whitman. She allowed herself to smile.

"Swell!" he said, leaning on the desk as if he couldn't quite believe it. "I knew you'd come through for me. I'll pick you up at around eight o'clock. Er—just where do you live?"

She told him, went back to work. From time to time, throughout the day, a faint smile arched the curve of her well-cut and full young lips. After three months of being a lady hermit; the idea of such a date, even though it would probably be awful, in fact, was not unpleasant in prospect.

"Men!" she thought. "Darn them!"

You couldn't get along with them or without them. Like Churchill's Germans, they were at your feet or at your throat.

She bathed and dressed with particular care, using a dusky ivory powder and extremely dark lipstick along with a dash of eye shadow. Of mascara, she had no need. She donned a long, simple high-necked black crepe dinner dress,

wore a single gold clip and gilt leather link belt for ornamentation. If he wanted her to look sophisticated, she jolly well would.

He looked unexpectedly smart himself in a dark slate-blue worsted lounge suit which had obviously known the hand of a good tailor. He had also procured her a pair of more than passable gardenias which he handed her as she clambered into one of Reddington City's few cabs.

"You look marvelous," he told her as she fastened the flowers to her dress with the gold clip. He sniffed. "You also smell marvelous."

"I ought to," she said. "What you're sniffing is just about the last ounce of Schiaparelli's Shocking in these parts."

"It's fine," he said.

They rode along in silence, and Toni felt a sort of electricity building between them. Immediately she was back on her guard, a single-headed Cerberus watching her own virtue. It was, she reminded herself sharply, either a gag or he belonged to someone else.

"And I'm supposed to be ye great sophisticate!" she thought. "Ye gods and little guppies! Wonder what the torch singer is like?"

"Hey, come on back here," he said, smiling at her.

She snapped out of it, regarded him with almost painful detachment. His nose was just a trifle too long, she saw, but the little tilt at its tip more than made up for it. He tended to freckle, too, but on him it didn't look bad.

"You," he told her unexpectedly, "are quite a dish, Miss Lindsay."

"Call me Toni," she said. "Most of the men I know call all the dishes by their first names. And tell me more about this—Miss Grey."

"Arlene?" he said. "Well, she's really swell. If she weren't, I would never have . . . But you can see for yourself. We're here."

**T**HE Copa, rather to Toni's surprise, proved to be a more than passable imitation of its Manhattan progenitor—in other words, a fair small city replica of an upper-bracket Latin-American café. The lights were dim, the music soft and vibrant as they entered.

Toni's first impression of Arlene Grey as she stepped into the spotlight to sing

was of a real beauty. In a strapless blue velvet evening gown which set off her white skin and copper hair to perfection she was a lush and striking figure. And her voice, as she took off in "Begin the Beguine," was as smooth and slick as her gown.

Later, when the singer sat down at the table, Toni saw that Arlene Grey was not a genuine beauty. Her features were a trifle too large, her hair a bit too bright. But she was a girl who could project the illusion of beauty.

"You're good," Toni told her honestly, her eyes on the large square diamond which adorned the singer's fourth finger. "How does it happen you haven't hit New York yet? You'd really clean up there."

"As a matter of fact," Arlene said in a pleasant, husky voice, "I'm still pretty new at this. Harry Beldon, my agent, doesn't want to bring me into New York until next season. He thinks I need more work."

"Has Harry been out here lately to hear you?" Toni asked.

The girl shook her head, threw a warm and friendly smile at Brett Whitman. Toni suddenly felt as if she were being put through a wringer. Which, she tried to tell herself, was absurd. Brett Whitman wasn't hers, she didn't want him to be hers. Or did she? Just then, she didn't know.

Or rather, she did. It must, she realized with quick awareness of falling over a precipice, have been going on for some time. Come to think of it, she had been watching Brett around the office, studying the way he moved and talked and lit himself cigarettes.

Which didn't make it any less of a shock. It was startling, to put it mildly, to find herself, after fleeing New York to get away from a pair of other men, both of them with wives, falling in love with a sandy-haired stranger, himself in love or at least tied to a singer.

"This," she thought bitterly, "would happen to me."

"What do you think of her?" Brett inquired when Arlene Grey had been summoned back to duty. "She's really a swell girl. But she wants to tie me up for keeps. And with her career and everything—"

"She is most attractive," said Toni, who was engaged in some fast emo-



tional slide-rule calculating. "That girl is going places." She didn't add, "You don't know how far or how fast, brother."

Toni Lindsay, the girl who, protected in her beauty by the thought that there would always be another man along if this one went his way, had let herself be pushed around by more predatory females in the past, was going to take a little predatory action herself. That ring, she decided, was going to belong on her finger.

Later, when she was home—un-kissed, too, darn it—she tried to justify what she was doing by declaring to herself that Arlene and Brett, with their divergent interests, never would be happy. Hadn't Brett as good as hinted as much when he asked her for the date?

**E**ARLY the next morning, she caught a train for New York. It was Sunday, and she had the day off. Harry Beldon was eating breakfast-lunch in robe and silk pajamas on the terrace of his apartment when Toni was admitted by the colored servant. The agent rose and held out both hands to her.

"For Pete's sake, fugitive!" he said. "Sit down and have some coffee. Nicodemus, get Miss Lindsay some breakfast. This is really a surprise, Toni. Decided to let me cash in on you in Hollywood after all?"

"No, to be honest," said the girl. "Also to be honest, Harry, I'm here to ask a favor and maybe do you one."

"It's a shame to waste that puss and figure of yours behind a desk," said the agent. "Sure you aren't considering changing your mind?"

"Sure," said Toni. She hesitated, then plunged into the middle of things. "You know I'm an industrial designer. Well, Harry, I'm working at Reddington City now. Last night, I heard a client of yours."

"Arlene Grey!" said Harry quickly. "That's swell. How is she?"

"Professionally," said Toni, "she's terrific. She's ripe for the big-time if I ever heard anyone. Personally—and here's where my favor comes in—I wish you'd find her a spot here in New York right now."

"Hold it," said Beldon, his eyes narrowing. "I was keeping her under wraps for two very special reasons.

One, I didn't want to rush things for the kid. She's only been at it a bit more than a year. Two, I'm nuts about her. I just gave her the granddaddy of all diamond rings a couple of months ago. I want to marry her, Toni."

"I didn't know, Harry," said Toni.

Her lips had thinned as she considered the situation. She had taken it for granted that the ring Arlene Grey was wearing had come from Brett Whitman. Apparently, it had come from Harry. It was just possible that Brett's whole story might be made up of the same tissue. If it were . . . Her eyes shot sparks.

"If she's making a sucker out of me," said the agent, "I'll—as a matter of fact, I couldn't do a thing. I'm nuts about her."

"It may be all right," said Toni. "In fact, it probably is, except for a certain young man I know." She finished her coffee, rose gracefully. "Thanks, Harry. You'll be hearing from me. Don't let this worry you. I think I'm the one who's being played for a guppy."

Back in Reddington City that afternoon, she found that one Mr. Brett Whitman had telephoned her half a dozen times. There were also, her landlady informed her, some gardenias in the ice box.

"Give them to the cat," said Toni. "Better still, wear them yourself. And come what may, I'm not in to Mr. Whitman."

"I think you've gone out of your mind," said the landlady.

"You're telling me!" said Toni.

Arlene, she discovered, thanks to the telephone book, lived in a hotel not many blocks away. It took Toni all of eight minutes to get there.

"Please," said Toni, "don't think I'm nuts, Arlene, but I want to ask you one question?"

"I want to ask you a couple," said the singer grimly. "What was the big idea of getting poor Harry all steamed up this morning?"

"I'm sorry about that," said Toni, "though it shouldn't do you anything but good. What I want you to do is return your ring to Brett Whitman. With a note telling him you've broken off the engagement."

"I think you *must* be nuts," said the singer, sinking down on the sofa with a

look of dazed amazement on her handsome face. "You want me to send Harry's ring to a guy I'm not engaged to, with a note telling this guy that I'm breaking off an engagement that never existed?"

"That," said Toni, "is the general idea. You send that ring to the office tomorrow and I'll see that you get it back right away. He really has it coming to him, the big lug."

"You must like him a lot," said Arlene, smiling.

"If hate is akin to love," said Toni, "I'm just a super Juliet where Brett Whitman is concerned. I could literally love him to death."

"I'm probably being a triple-plated fool," said Arlene, "but I'll do it. Just how do you want me to write the note?"

THE following day was well larded with sunshine as Toni reached the war plant and showed her badge at the gate. Brett was waiting inside like a great hungry dog. His fingers closed around her arm. "I tried to get you all day yesterday," he said. "Did I do something Saturday night to make you sore? If I did, I'm sorry."

It was worth it, Toni told herself, to have him crawl like that. It made up, in part, for what he'd put her through. She wouldn't have minded so much falling for his simple-minded gag if she hadn't fallen for him in the process. But keeping him on his knees was not a part of the day's program. She smiled at him.

"As a matter of fact," she said, removing her hat and hanging it on the peg behind the door of her office, "it was your affairs—or affair, rather—that kept me tied up all day."

"Just what do you mean?" he asked her. His voice was not quite steady. He looked at her as if he thought she were a mirage.

"Well," she said brightly, "as I understood it, you wanted me to help you break your engagement to Arlene Grey. You thought I was—er—sophisticated enough to handle it."

"You—you didn't!" he gasped, turning almost white. "You wouldn't!"

At that moment, and a stage director couldn't have timed it better, the special delivery boy came in with the package containing the ring.

He looked at it when he had it open,

blinked at the diamond, and his grayish hue became a bottle green. Finally he read the note, read it aloud like a madman muttering a prayer. It said:

Dearest Brett:

I am afraid our paths will remain ever further apart. Fond as I am of you, I am taking the liberty of returning to you the ring you gave me. Best of luck.

Arlene.

"Isn't that complete enough?" Toni asked him sweetly.

"It's crazy!" he said. "Utterly insane. I don't get it at all."

"Come, Brett," said Toni. "Don't take it so hard. In time, you'll get over it. Take a reef in yourself. Buy some rose-colored glasses."

"But that's just it," he said, his jaw still slack. "There is nothing to get over." Suddenly he gripped her hard by the shoulders, looked her straight in the eye. "Toni," he said, "you didn't steal this ring, did you? Because, you see, it doesn't belong to me."

"Of course, I didn't steal it," she said. "Good heavens, Brett, do you think I'm a thief? And just a moment, darling. What do you mean, the ring isn't yours? Is your engagement somebody else's, too?"

"Did you call me darling?" he asked her, a gleam in his eye.

"It was purely a slip of the tongue," she said severely. "Brett, I want to know the truth about your engagement to Arlene."

"There wasn't any," he said, then blinked. "And you found it out! Don't be sore, honey, please. I had to do something about you."

"Why didn't you act like a man and ask me for a date?" she asked.

"Because," he said gently, "you were so obviously sick of men, or something, I don't believe you'd have given me a break."

She considered this, realized suddenly that she was still halfway in his arms. It was not, she found, unpleasant. She went a little more than halfway.

"Did you, a moment ago, call me honey?" she asked.

"I did," he told her.

"Was it a slip of the tongue?"

"Was your calling me darling?"

"Oh, shut up," she said. "We can talk it over later."

With which, she proceeded to prove it was no time for conversation.



## INCREASED WAR ACTIVITY FOR WOMEN PILOTS

WASHINGTON believes that indications of increased war activity for women pilots are revealed in the creation of the new post of Director of Women Pilots in the Army Air Force, and the appointment of Miss Jacqueline Cochran, only woman winner of the Bendix Trophy, to the post.

In her new job, Miss Cochran will serve as assistant to Major General Barney M. Giles, assistant Chief of Staff, Operations, Commitments and Requirements. Her headquarters are in the Pentagon Building, brain pan of the Army.

The War Department has gone on record as saying that Miss Cochran's new appointment is in "recognition of the achievement and growing importance of women pilots in the war effort."

It is generally felt in Washington that the Women's Auxiliary Ferry Squadron, the members of which now ferry planes within the country, may now be called on for other duties, such as courier and instruction services, although it is deemed unlikely that they will be used in transoceanic ferrying. Miss Cochran was founder and commandant of the WAFS before her appointment.

## CUTS BOOKKEEPING RED TAPE

WHEN it comes to thinking up war winners, machine workers have no monopoly on ideas. This is demonstrated by Miss Elsie McCreery who works in the payroll department at General Motor's Buick. She was awarded a \$100 war bond for an idea which greatly simplified a bookkeeping operation in her department.

It had been the practice to make a posting of the salary expense of each plant protection man to the payroll book of the factory to which he was assigned. Since the plant protection time sheets were kept in alphabetical order for the convenience of the men, considerable time was wasted in cross-checking.

Miss McCreery suggested that the posting be discontinued and that plant protection ex-

penses be prorated among all factories, as is done with other non-production expenses. The division official who investigated Miss McCreery's idea reported: "This suggestion is a very good one and will be adopted by the Accounting Department."

## DUTCH WOMEN CONCEAL LABOR DEPORTEES

THE chief occupation of Dutch women today is the protection of men hiding from labor conscription and imprisonment, according to a young woman who recently escaped from the occupied Lowlands.

She said that, though she and her husband lived in only three rooms, they had hidden twenty students during their last five months in the Netherlands. The woman leader in this work was a scientific leader before the war. Now she spends her time traveling with refugees and finding them safe hiding places.

## WOMEN TAKE OVER JOBS ON PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD

SINCE Pearl Harbor and the war began to create a manpower shortage, the Pennsylvania Railroad has employed and trained for their particular jobs more than 22,000 women. They serve, according to recent company statements, as conductors, repairmen, cleaners and oilers. This total is exclusive of girls who do paper work in the various railroad offices.

According to company officials, three out of five of the railroad's employees are now women, as compared with one out of seven before the Japs dealt their backhand blow. Furthermore, the total working force of the Pennsylvania has been increased by 65,000 workers to meet heavier wartime traffic demands.

## GIRL RUBBER WORKER WINS INDIVIDUAL MERIT AWARD

AN UNSPECTACULAR employee of the Goodyear Aircraft Corporation in Akron, Ohio, was the winner, last year, of the first award for individual production

merit to be given to a woman by the company.

Her name is Mrs. Mary Williams, and she is the wife of a young officer in the Army. Her job consisted of installing repair kits on the collapsible rubber life rafts which have already saved hundreds of airmen shot down over the sea. She fitted special rubber discs into the kits to give them shape and make them waterproof. Much rubber was used in the process.

Then, inspiration struck Mary. It occurred to her that a double fold at each corner would do the job, making the discs unnecessary, cutting down the amount of rubber needed by thirty percent and saving vast amounts of time. The Labor Management Committee heard about it and recommended her for the award. Before becoming a war worker, Mary was a department store cashier.

### ENGLISH ALL-WOMAN FACTORY REPAIRS TRUCKS

**I**N the outskirts of London stands a factory completely staffed by women where worn-out or bombed-out trucks are rebuilt for further service.

This factory was established early in the war when a trucking firm, unable to replace old trucks with new ones, decided to do its own repairing. It opened with eight male superintendents and four women workers. Today its 160 women employees make up the entire personnel. All of them are skilled in five or more jobs, can repair and reassemble a truck in six hours.

Some of the jobs they do are very difficult. Violet Jones' job of setting machines for boring is usually done by a foreman. She measures her own crankshafts, takes over the cases, lines them up for boring, sets the cutter and makes a rough cut. Then, checking up final sizes, she sets the finishing bar and does the final cut.

Joyce Mann, another worker in the factory, bores cylinder blocks for oversize pistons and sleeving, setting her own cutters for the job.

### MANICURISTS SAVE THE DAY

**I**NDUSTRY generally has come to realize that preconceived notions about what women can and can't do are dangerous. While on the surface it may appear that their former experience has no relation to the new type of job, it may be definitely related.

For example, who would have imagined that manicurists could do an emergency job in a war plant? Yet, that's just what happened! At the Ford Willow Run plant workers were needed to do highly refined instrument jobs that required close dimensions and much filing.

To quote Edsel Ford, one of the men workers in the plant "had the bright idea of sending for a lot of manicurists, and we found these girls could do this other kind of filing equally well."

### COLUMBUS DISCOVERS "APRON SHIFT"

**S**OMETHING new in war work shifts is now going full blast at an industrial plant in Columbus, Ohio, these days. It is a shift made up of local housewives who are eager to help out directly in the war effort, but who have been unable to do so because the demands of their housekeeping have not allowed them time to serve a full shift regularly.

The apron shift does this neatly by cutting itself in half. One group of matrons work from eight until noon, then goes home to pick up the pieces after junior. The second group comes on at one p. m. and works until five.

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## Tired Kidneys Often Bring Sleepless Nights

Doctors say your kidneys contain 15 miles of tiny tubes or filters which help to purify the blood and keep you healthy. When they get tired and don't work right in the daytime, many people have to get up nights. Frequent or scanty passages with smarting and burning sometimes shows there is something wrong with your kidneys or bladder. Don't neglect this condition and lose valuable, restful sleep.

When disorder of kidney function permits

poisonous matter to remain in your blood, it may also cause nagging backache, rheumatic pains, leg pains, loss of pep and energy, swelling, puffiness under the eyes, headaches and dizziness.

Don't wait! Ask your druggist for Doan's Pills, used successfully by millions for over 40 years. They give happy relief and will help the 15 miles of kidney tubes flush out poisonous waste from your blood. Get Doan's Pills.

(Adv.)



"So, you're the girl who caught Bob Renshaw on the rebound," Peter said

## Reservation for Romance

By MILDRED HOUGHTON COMFORT

*Amy Warriner didn't know it, but she was headed for a nice mix-up until a handsome soldier unscrambled her heart!*

AMY WARRINER did not feel right about her reservation to Chicago on the northbound train, yet here she sat on a station bench, in plenty of time. When the government needed all available facilities for moving troops, it wasn't right for a girl to take up space—just to visit her fiancé.

Then she thought: If I were sure of

Bob Renshaw, I'd never think of chasing after him like this. I'd send him this telegram I wrote in a wildly patriotic moment—GIVING RESERVATION TO UNCLE SAM STOP SEE YOU AT EASTER—and let it go at that. But, because I caught him on the rebound, I'm scared to death I'll lose him.

Opening her new saddle leather purse,

she looked at herself critically in the small mirror, the soft brown hair that framed a too-round face with greenish hazel eyes, her short, straight nose. The brown suit wasn't bad, nor the matching felt hat with the topping green feather, but she herself was nothing to write home about.

Anyway, Bob Renshaw had asked her to marry him, handsome Bob who was both rich and kind!

He asked *me* to marry him, Amy was thinking. And he could have married anybody in our crowd. He could even have Carolyn Spencer back again.

Everybody said that Carolyn Spencer had been a fool to do what she did. But then Carolyn had lost her head—lost it over Peter Durant who had come back from Tunisia a hero, to be Bob's best man.

But Peter would have nothing to do with Carolyn—and the foolish Carolyn had lost both men, for Bob had his pride. The wedding was called off just a few days before it was to have been solemnized.

Then Bob came to me for consolation, Amy continued with her thoughts, and I caught him on the rebound. But as soon as Carolyn heard he wanted to marry me, she wanted him back herself. She's meeting him in Chicago on business, she says, but I know that it's only an excuse to try to get him back. I have a right to go and protect my own interests!

Her magazine slid to the floor and, with the perversity of inanimate objects, opened to the "Kid in Upper Four."

I'll be glad to stand so you can sit, she said to herself as she gazed at the picture, sit up so you may sleep . . . wait in the diner. . . . But you wouldn't want me to lose my man, because I wasn't on the job, would you? I'd risk it if it wasn't for that letter.

She knew the letter by heart, though she had received it only a few hours before by Airmail, Special Delivery:

Darling:

I know you'll understand my not meeting you in Chicago. Take a taxi to the hotel. This is rather hard to explain in writing, but Carolyn is going to be here for just a few hours, and there are things we must straighten out—forever.

You're a great girl, Amy, and only you would understand.

Yours with love,

Bob.

P. S.—Look out for Peter Durant en route. Gets on at breakfast time.

Amy had never seen this magnetic Peter Durant that all the crowd talked about. She had been ill with flu at the time, and had missed all the excitement. But she had seen his pictures in the paper, and she knew that he had red hair and hazel eyes. She'd look out for him all right. . . .

SHE hurried through the gates and found her reserved seat in the second car. The train ran out of the dreary sheds, through the shabby part of town, and then into a rain that drove like a threshing machine across the new fields of soy beans. The rain made a thick white curtain that shut out from view what pretty scenery there must have been in the softly rolling land.

Amy read and got bored by turns.

"Where will we be at breakfast time?" she asked the conductor when he came around.

He told her and said they'd be taking on more cars there. Amy knew that meant troops.

Once during the night, the train stopped for passengers. A boyish young soldier took the seat beside her.

"If I doze off," he apologetically asked Amy, "will you wake me at breakfast time?"

Amy felt like talking to someone anyway.

"Going to see Peter Durant?" she said. "He's one of the heroes of Tunisia, you know."

"You're telling me!" The boy chuckled. "I'll say he was a hero—even if he got a little lead in his tough body. I'd be willing to limp to glory like that. He's a great guy!"

"You know him well?"

"Not personally. But I know a guy who knows a guy who says that if it hadn't been Durant, he'd never be seeing another muddy hill or an olive grove again."

"Then I suppose you've heard of his—romance," Amy ventured.

"It's a regimental secret," the boy admitted, "though I never would call it a romance. The way I heard it, this Bob Renshaw asked Peter to be his best man. The girl decided she wanted Durant to be the Best Man in earnest."



"And the honorable Peter Durant refused to traffic with the perfidious maiden," Amy added.

"That's right." The boy settled his long legs.

The lights in the train were dimmed and the rails sang a steady humming tune. The air had grown cold and the wind hammered on the windows. Amy drew her topcoat up over her shoulders, her eyes became mere slits, and after a time she dozed. . . .

Someone was shaking her. Startled, she looked into the eyes of the young soldier.

"Your station! Breakfast is served!" he announced. "Say, who's supposed to sound this reveille, you or me?"

"Oh, I'm so sorry," Amy flushed.

"You can't say that in the Army!" the boy teased. "You're on K.P. Anyway, so long, and luck to you with the honorable Peter Durant. I'll bet on you."

"Bet on me—for what?" Amy demanded, but the boy laughed and made his way down the aisle.

She came awake. She went to the lounge to refresh her make-up and adjust her clothes. Once more she gazed at the sparkling diamond solitaire that only a month ago had graced Carolyn Spencer's left hand.

Bob had been rather apologetic about offering Amy the very ring Carolyn had worn, but his excuse had been that he couldn't afford anything so fine now. Besides, the solitaire had been his mother's, and, as he said, Amy was just the sort of girl his mother would have picked out for him.

He had said that time and time again:

"Amy, you're the girl my Mother would have chosen. Why didn't I have sense enough to know that in the first place?"

His long, fine hands had framed Amy's face, and his serious gray eyes had seen nothing in the small Warriner living room but Amy herself. He had said, "Amy, is it too late?"

Of course, it hadn't been. She couldn't bear to see the sorrow in those sad, gray eyes.

Bob and Carolyn had even gone so far as to furnish a little apartment in Chicago so that they could be together on Bob's furloughs. But furloughs had been cancelled, and now Bob was leaving for points unknown—and it would be Amy,

not Carolyn, who would kiss him good-by.

Of course, Bob and Carolyn had some business to settle—that was natural—but she hoped it wouldn't take long.

THE sun was coming up, spreading pink light palely over the new green fields. Amy paused between cars to look out. Chill air sifted through the couplings and her legs felt cold even in the service-weight stockings. She was saving her last pair of nylons for her dinner date with Bob.

Another diner was being added, but the overflow would be taken care of in the regular dining car. Amy secured a seat at a table for two, keeping her eye on the far end where newcomers were entering.

She knew him at once, the khaki-clad powerfully-built young man with the red-brown hair and the bright hazel eyes that saw everybody, including her.

A menu card was being placed before her.

"Please give that young man—the one with red hair—the seat opposite me," she asked the waiter.

"Very well, Madam."

It was as easy as that. But the follow-up wasn't so easy. Peter Durant sat right across from her, and close up he looked bigger and more formidable than ever. And worst of all, there was no question about the fact that he was suspicious.

"Very kind of you," he offered coldly. "I didn't know that the rest of the diner was reserved."

"It wasn't." The general confusion was being rapidly brought into order. "I asked to have you seated here because I wanted to talk to you."

"See here!" Red glints in the hazel eyes matched the red hair. "I have no intention of going on with this hero stuff. I didn't do anything that any other honest-to-goodness American wouldn't have done if he'd been me."

"Yes, I know."

Peter Durant was taken back by the gentle acknowledgment.

"Now I'm embarrassed," he said with a laugh. "There've been so many autograph hunters! You're sure you don't want my autograph?"

"I don't happen to be an autograph collector. Thanks, just the same."

"Who are you, anyway?" And then to the waiter, "Bring us both Breakfast Number Four—and any extras in the kitchen. We're hungry!"

Amy made a little protesting gesture about the order, but she knew it was foolish to make an issue of it.

"I'm Amy Warriner," she said when he turned back to her.

"No! So you're the girl who caught Bob Renshaw on the rebound!"

"You don't make it sound—very alluring. There might have been a double rebound, you know, if you had loved Carolyn. . . . What's the matter?"

"I may be a bit old-fashioned, but I can't believe that love rebounds like a tennis ball so the other fellow can have a whack at it. I think love comes to people and it stays. Both my grandparents celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversaries."

"I see." Amy felt her heart sink within her. "Then you don't believe that Bob loves me? He said he did. He even said his mother would have chosen a girl like me."

Peter cut into the slice of pink ham alongside the omelet on his plate.

"Any mother would choose a girl like you," he offered politely. "You're nice."

"But you don't think Bob loves me. I can tell it even when you shake your head. Well, if he didn't love me, why would he have me meet him in Chicago?"

"Maybe I can judge more honestly when I see you fly into each other's arms."

There was a stubborn silence which Amy had the courage to break.

"Bob's not meeting me at the station," she volunteered.

"No?"

"No. He's finishing some business with Carolyn Spencer. Naturally, there would be certain things, like wedding presents maybe. . . . Mr. Durant, I'll thank you to keep your thoughts to yourself."

"I will," Peter Durant promised. "But you're going to miss something."

There was nothing to do after that but finish her breakfast with dignity and go back to her seat.

When they reached Chicago, Peter hurried over just as she was stepping down to the platform. She summoned a porter before he had a chance to say anything.

"I can take care of myself, thanks," she said when he offered to help.

"Okay," Peter agreed blithely. "Thought maybe I could pinch-hit for Bob."

CABS cruised around the runway with thundering noises. Amy, finding herself deserted by the porter who had taken her tip, watched one cab after another slide past her. At last she thought she had one, when it stopped to pick up a young soldier—Peter Durant, of course!

"Come on, Miss Warriner!" he shouted. "I'll give you a lift."

Why, he had been keeping an eye on her all the time! But Amy was glad to slip into the taxi. Peter gave the driver the name of her hotel and they were off. The roar of the El and the noisy traffic prevented conversation—for which Amy was grateful.

When they reached the hotel Peter picked up Amy's luggage and led the way to the desk. Her reservation had been taken care of—and there was also a message for her: Mr. Renshaw would be unable to have lunch with her—but how about an early dinner—say, at five o'clock?

Amy thrust the message into Peter's hands.

"Say it!" she cried. "Go on and say it!"

"You're tired, sitting up all night," Peter reasoned, "and maybe you're misjudging Bob. He probably feels worse about the delay than you do. Tell you what—you have lunch with me! We'll make it at one so you'll have time for a little rest. Travel is not what it was."

Never had Amy felt so lost, so weary with a hopelessness that was akin to panic. If only she could see Bob! If only she could feel his fine eyes upon her in a wordless caress! If only she could hear him exclaim, "Darling!" She almost hated Peter Durant who had made her doubt.

But when she met him at one o'clock in the lobby and when he tucked her arm companionably through his, all her dislike melted away. He would make time pass until she could be with Bob.

"How about the Victorian Room?" he inquired and she nodded happily.

She loved the bouquets of red roses, the portraits, and the chandeliers of a

bygone era. The menu cards were like Lady Godey prints. The food was delicious—the fruit cocktails, the scallops, the fresh raspberry sherbet.

"Bob Renshaw is in his right mind at last," Peter declared suddenly. "I bet he'll cut his conference with Carolyn short when he realizes your train is in."

"You're being kind," Amy said. "You're thinking what I'm thinking—that these hours may be very precious to Bob and Carolyn. But I don't like to think so. Anyway, I'll make him forget about her after he's married to me. . . . You think I can, don't you?" She felt herself close to tears.

"I think you'd make any man forget anything he wanted to forget," Peter assured her.

A string ensemble had begun to play softly, and Amy half closed her eyes. Suddenly her eyes grew round and frightened and her knees began to feel weak so that she could not have risen if she wanted to. For coming across the room, weaving in and out among the tables that were filling with guests, came Bob Renshaw, dark and good-looking in his uniform, and with him Carolyn Spencer in a fuchsia-colored dressmaker suit decorated with a shoulder corsage made of sequins. On her shining curls she wore a little matching velvet hat with an impudent purple feather. She dangled a wisp of a scarf in her gloved hands.

"Right out of the third act," Peter remarked, amused. "Keep your chin up, Amy."

"Hello," Carolyn said, now beside their table.

"Hello." Amy could see that Carolyn had been weeping—putting on an act, no doubt.

Bob was smiling as he bent down to kiss Amy.

"How are you, honey?" he said. "Sorry I kept you waiting. But Carolyn and I had to iron things out during the lunch hour. Nice of you to find someone to talk to. How are you, Durant? Didn't know you knew Amy."

"Oh, I know her very well," Peter said. "Feel as though I'd known her always."

"How can you say that, Peter?" Carolyn pouted. "You couldn't have met her until today. Was it on the train?"

"It was on the train," Peter acknowl-

edged. Then, "Come on, Baby. Let's have a drink."

Over her squealing protestations, he drew Carolyn down the red-carpeted stairs and disappeared with her in the direction of the cocktail lounge.

MAY I sit down?" Bob asked stiffly and took Peter's chair. His hands reached over and captured both of Amy's, and his mood softened. "Darned if I didn't feel a little jealous of Durant! But I guess you wouldn't fall for this hero stuff, darling. You're too sensible."

"I think," Amy surprised herself by saying, "that a man must have something special in his make-up to be a hero. And after he has done his brave deed, there must be something of the glory in himself. . . . You'll be a hero yourself, Bob, before you get through. I feel it."

Her heart beat faster. Bob was so very handsome, and now that she was with him, she felt provoked with herself for ever doubting him.

"Amy, I love you," he was saying. "You don't doubt that I love you, do you?" Then he added, "I love you more than ever."

He was repeating his love as though he had to assure himself that it was so. And Amy had to know the truth.

"Bob," she said, hoping he would deny it, "you aren't saying good-by to Carolyn."

"What do you call it then, if it's not good-by?" He looked a little frightened.

"You're saying hello," Amy said. "If you were really through with her, you wouldn't be having a good time lunching with her in this glamorous place. And if she were through with you, she wouldn't be all dressed up like an actress."

"Amy, I never thought you'd be catty. You were enjoying yourself—and with a man you hardly know."

"I know him well even if I haven't known him long," Amy said and then stopped. "Bob, I'm sorry," she admitted after a pause. "I guess I'm just plain jealous. Much as it hurts me, I've got to know. Was just your pride hurt when Carolyn jilted you? Was it just a momentary infatuation she felt for Peter? Deep down inside of her, does she still care for you? Why was she crying?"

"She felt rotten because she'd let me down—especially now that I'm leaving

—maybe for overseas. She may never see me again."

"She'd go back to you if you'd have her?" Amy felt all cold inside waiting for the answer.

"How should I know? I haven't asked her." Bob hunched his chair around the end of the table so that his arm could encircle Amy's shoulders. "Let's forget Carolyn, honey. I belong to you, and you belong to me. And I'd never let anybody down, you know that."

"Yes, I know that. Even if you didn't love me as much as you love Carolyn, you'd marry me and try to make me a good husband."

"I don't love Carolyn, I tell you. No woman can make a fool of me. Amy, you're the grandest girl in the world. You're the girl my Mother would have picked for me."

"Yes. I know."

"You aren't interested in Peter Durant, Amy?"

"Good heavens, no! . . . Well, let's go and look them up. . . . I believe Peter has the check."

They walked out into the lobby together. Quite casually Amy slid her arm through his, and her eyes were shining almost mischievously.

"Did you know, darling," she said, "that I almost didn't come? Want to see the telegram I almost sent you?"

She took the crumpled message from her purse.

"'Giving reservation to Uncle Sam. See you Easter,'" Bob read. "That's very patriotic of you, Amy. I suppose civilian travel does hamper troop movements. . . . But I'm very glad you came."

"Are you, Bob?" She took a deep breath. "I sha'n't be able to come again, though. I wouldn't feel I could."

"No, I don't suppose you could, Amy," Bob acknowledged. "You'd be the kind to think of the kid in Upper Four!"

He had hit on the truth without really knowing it.

"Civilian travel's out for the duration, insofar as I'm concerned," Amy decided. "Is all the rest of the day mine? Because, if it is, I have a proposition to make."

"IT'S all yours, honey," Bob agreed, "except for an hour or two. You see Carolyn and I had rented an apartment—I guess I told you about it—and

Carolyn put some blue curtains in the bedroom and some checkered stuff in the kitchen—and I planted some bulbs in the window box."

"Going out and dig them up?" Amy was sharp. "See here, what did you people do all morning? Weren't you out at the apartment at all?"

"Yes, but . . . but . . ." Bob stammered. "Carolyn was too upset. She even thought maybe she'd keep the apartment anyway."

"Why?" Amy's voice was a whip.

"She thought we could be friends anyway—that whenever I came back, I'd have a familiar place to come to."

"The familiar place would be her arms!"

"Amy!"

"You still want to marry me? You still love me?"

"Amy, you have my words, the ring, everything! You just name the day, honey."

"All right, I'll name it. Today!"

"To . . . day?"

"That's what I said."

"You make me very happy, Amy. I thought you wanted to wait until I came back, but, if you want it this way, darling, it's all right with me."

They had reached the entrance to the cocktail lounge.

Amy could feel Bob, tense, beside her. She dared not trust herself to look at him. She knew he was doing his best to smooth over the shock she had just given him.

It was easy enough to locate Peter and Carolyn, for among so much khaki, Carolyn's fuchsia suit stood out like a bright flower. Peter's red head, too, could not be mistaken. He was bending toward Carolyn, absorbed, intimate, attentive. His attitude, for no reason whatsoever, made Bob furious.

Leaving Amy in the doorway, he strode over to their table. Peter had risen to help Carolyn on with her coat. Angrily Bob thrust Peter aside so that he stumbled back against a table, losing his balance. Like a young panther he was on his feet instantly, and his right fist swung to Bob's jaw.

Everybody turned in their direction. Some people laughed and some jeered. Amy quickly forced herself between the two men.

"Let's get out of here at once!" she

begged. "Peter, leave Bob alone. You don't understand. I can explain everything."

Somehow she got them into the lobby.

"All right," Peter demanded, "explain everything. What's eating Renshaw now?"

"He's excited," Amy said, "because I'm going to marry him today."

She heard Carolyn's distracted cry and Peter's exclamation as she rushed for the elevator.

In her room she dressed with hands that trembled so she could hardly fasten the zipper to the silk jersey formal she put on. It was a beautiful gown, a long snug bodice and a lovely swirling skirt that touched the floor. Its vivid Kelly green brought out all the natural beauty of her hazel-green eyes.

Beneath her fluttering skirt peeked tiny gold sandals and on her arms she wore the old gold bracelets studded with pearls that her father had brought from China.

I look—beautiful, Amy said to herself, quite simply, as she reviewed the whole effect in the bathroom mirror. She was surprised because she had never thought of herself as a beauty.

There was a pummeling on her door.

"Go away!" she ordered, "or I'll call the house detective."

"All right. Call him." Peter sounded defiantly confident. "Call him and make a scene you can't explain. Get into the papers! Tell the press how you almost went patriotic by passing up a train trip, but you had to check up on your man so he wouldn't get away!"

Scarlet, Amy threw open the door and said:

"Come in! I should think you'd be ashamed of yourself, yelling things to the high heavens! Well?"

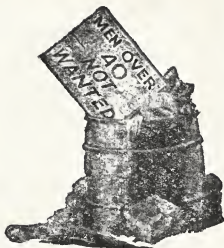
**WELL!** Peter stared at the vision before him. "Come on, Amy, and let Peter in on it. What are you up to?"

"I'm marrying Bob Renshaw today," Amy announced.

"In that outfit?" Peter threw himself into an armchair and lit a cigarette. "Lady, be good. You can't go and marry a man in that actress get-up. Brides wear white satin and veils, don't you know?"

"I'm marrying Bob Renshaw today," Amy repeated. "I admit I didn't bring

(Continued on page 87)



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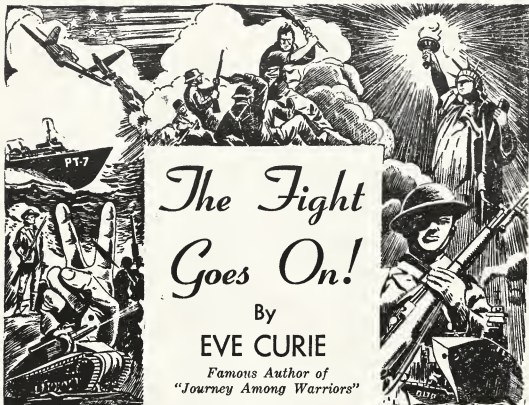
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# The Fight Goes On!

By

EVE CURIE

*Famous Author of  
"Journey Among Warriors"*

**M**Y COUNTRY, which fought so hard to make the Four Freedoms live, has lost all of them—temporarily. Freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want, freedom from fear . . . however highly prized they may be in a nation which still has its liberty, I can tell you that they are even more highly prized after you have lost them.

And they can still be lost to America, to the United Nations, to the world. I do not want to seem unduly pessimistic at a time when the Allies are winning important military victories, but the Fascist enemies of the freedoms we cherish are far from beaten. As the dagger is inched closer to their hearts, they will fight more desperately, more ruthlessly than before.

Let us remember that the Four Freedoms do not constitute a mere slogan. The contribution of Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill was much greater than that, for in pledging that these freedoms would be extended to anyone, anywhere in the world who wanted them, they were crystallizing the ideals and the

hopes of decent people everywhere.

No, the Four Freedoms were not invented two years ago, and neither will they be waiting for us, wrapped in shiny packages, at the peace table. They must be fought for every minute, with vigor and courage. And when the war itself is finally won, the fight must go on—to refine those freedoms, to broaden their scope, to extend them to all who hold them dear.

A big undertaking? Yes, but not by any means a new one. In the Magna Carta, in the French Declaration of the Rights of Man, in the American Declaration of Independence—the Four Freedoms are to be found. The words were different, perhaps. The ideas were the same.

And we of this generation have a magnificent opportunity—the greatest opportunity in history, perhaps—to make those freedoms permanent, to establish them for all time.

Never before, after all, has the issue been so simple. Today the lovers of freedom are fighting the haters of freedom . . . and slowly but surely, the lovers of freedom will win.



## RESERVATION FOR ROMANCE

(Continued from page 85)

this frock to be a wedding dress, but it will do."

"You're bluffing, Amy." Peter was watching her through the smoke of his cigarette, and there was something winsome about his smile. "Tell me the truth, girl. You'll need me on the inside."

"I'm marrying Bob Renshaw today," Amy declared. "This is the last time I'm going to tell you."

Peter got to his feet and came towards her. She couldn't move somehow. His arm slipped about her—both arms—and he kissed her. Little quivers ran along her spine, and there was a pain in her chest that would not let her breathe. Her lips met his as naturally as though she had always kissed him.

"I thought so," Peter said, and went out slamming the door behind him.

So he knew his power: he knew what he had done to her! Maybe he did it to every susceptible girl he met! Maybe he had kissed Carolyn once. Once was enough! With trembling fingers Amy adjusted the gold lace hat that belonged with the sandals and bracelets. She set the door ajar. It was almost time for Bob—and the wedding.

A knock sounded and she said, "Come in."

Peter entered. He raised his hand to forestall any criticism. No kisses!

"Bob asked me to pick you up," he announced. "Best man, believe it or not."

"I shouldn't think he'd trust you."

"Maybe he doesn't. . . . Say, you look scared to death."

"I'm not. I'm really very happy."

"Well, put on your smile. They're waiting for us."

"You mean Carolyn's waiting with him? You mean she has the bad taste to see us married?"

"People don't think much about good taste or bad taste when they're in love. Carolyn's a bit light-headed—or was when she decided to marry a hero. Now she's grateful that I had the good sense to tell her a thing or two. She's also grateful that Bob has completely forgiven her for injuring his pride. They're back where they started from."

"Then he still loves her—wants to marry her."

[Turn page]



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Going down in the elevator both were silent. Amy wondered what Peter must be thinking of a girl who wanted to hang on to a love that had never been hers. But Amy was making plans, and Peter couldn't dream of what they were. Later on, she was to realize that she had no idea what Peter was planning then, too.

Bob and Carolyn, side by side on a divan in the lobby, were frankly holding hands. Carolyn's face was devoid of color except for the vivid lip rouge. Bob's eyes met Amy's miserably.

"Well?" Amy spoke brightly. "Are we all ready?"

Tears rolled down Carolyn's cheeks and she furtively brushed them away. Although she tried to hide it you could see she was suffering agonies of torture.

"You look—beautiful, Amy," Bob managed. And then, "Peter said he'd take care of the license."

"Got it here!" Peter patted the space over his heart. "Bet you thought I'd forget or something."

"No, I knew you wouldn't forget." Bob's voice was flat.

"I have engaged the same pastor as before: he knows the situation, and I thought it would be less embarrassing," Peter rambled on. "He'll perform the ceremony in the chapel. Agreeable?"

Nobody answered. All of them got into a cab and drove to the chapel.

THE minister came to meet them at the door and drew them into his study. He patted Carolyn on the back in fatherly fashion, saying, "It's good to have you here again, my dear."

Carolyn shivered. Peter handed the good man the license and beamed on everybody in turn.

"I see you haven't changed the date," The pastor's smile was beatific. "That's just as well."

"Here! Let me see that!" Bob shouted. "Why, it's for Carolyn and me!" His face was white.

"The original," Peter admitted. "What did you expect?"

Carolyn began to weep.

"Oh, Amy," she whispered through her tears, "I should have known all along that you were only trying to teach me a lesson. You . . . you're the sweetest kid. . . ."

"Amy!" Bob was wringing her hand, gazing into her eyes. "Amy, you old darling, you knew me better than I knew myself! You'll always be our Number One friend."

Amy took the ring off her finger and handed it to Carolyn.

"We'll name the first daughter after you," Carolyn promised.

The rest was over quickly. The ceremony was performed and Amy found herself in a cab with Peter, driving back to the hotel. There were no explanations, no apologies from Peter!

At the elevator, she gave him her hand.

"I'm going to get a little sleep," she said, "then I'm leaving on the Southwind. Thanks for taking it out of my hands, Peter. I was really scared."

"I'll be waiting for you in the lobby," he said, and his smile told her that he had known all along. . . .

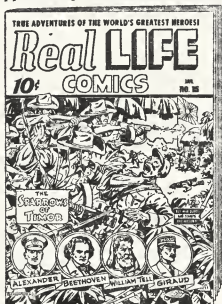
Several hours later Amy was checking out. She turned to pick up her bags and there was Peter beside her. They rode to the railroad station together. At the ticket window Amy learned that there were no available reservations on the Southwind.

"What shall I do?" she asked Peter.

"You'll have to take the reserved seat

[Turn page]

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of one of Uncle Sam's men—mine!" Peter said with a mischievous twinkle. "I have a reservation. I telephoned for it after you told me you were going home on this train. . . . But I must stay over—get back on the job. . . . You have something you want to tell me, Amy."

"Yes," she acknowledged. "Down in my heart I knew I wasn't going to marry Bob—but I was sure of it. . . . after you kissed me. But please don't think I'm trying to make up to you."

He saw her on the train, seated her. Moments were precious and she had to talk fast.

"I was going to lecture them and urge them to marry—" Amy tried to continue but Peter was very near.

"Good-by." He leaned down and kissed her lightly. "Maybe if I'm stationed near Chicago, you'll make a trip to see me."

She shook her head vigorously.

"Why not?" he asked and bent his head against her forehead tenderly.

"Because I trust you." It was hard to breathe with that strange pain in her chest. "Because, no matter where you are, I can trust you."

"Why, you conceited little—" he framed her face with his strong, brown hands, and his voice broke—"darling!"

He kissed her then for remembrance, and she felt warm and thrilled all through her. Then he rushed for the door and the train pulled out.

She sat very still. This would be her last train trip for the duration. She picked up the magazine Peter had left her and thumbed through the pages. Once more the "Kid in Upper Four" caught her eye. Amy smiled tenderly. Her heart was peaceful.



## LOVE NUMEROLOGY

(Continued from page 11)

Charles was back in a minute. "Jim won," said Charles and led Gloria out into the garden.

### Gloria Had Won, Too—

Gloria knew she had won, too. It was the happiest moment of her life. Her intuition told her what was coming. And the proposal did come. But the chances were it wouldn't have come if Gloria hadn't expressed herself in time. She knew it too, and realized that henceforth she would let her heart speak whenever logic showed that it was wise.

Gold is not made to be kept in the ground. And true affection is gold to the December-Number 3 girl. Affection must be expressed, otherwise it will tarnish!

### The January Girl

The January-Number 1 girl has a different problem, because the January girl does not hesitate to speak and act oftentimes on impulse, being courageous, independent and headstrong.

There is also an ambitious tendency with a good amount of aggression. The Number 1 girl will speak up to her lover and let him know just how she feels, good or bad. She is typical of the diamond which, although it radiates beauty and luster, can cut!

She makes a good teacher, nurse, secretary or housekeeper. She likes to try new things, and at times she might be considered fickle until she has really fallen in love. Her symbolic color is gray—and gray means uncertainty. Therefore she must learn early in life to make up her mind as to what she wants—and then go out and get it.

Being independent by nature she does not usually take advice and likes to find things out for herself. Her intuition is not always sure, because she jumps at conclusions too readily. She may see one action on the part of her lover which she doesn't like—and will let that one weakness undermine all her emotions.

### Obstacles Spurs Her On

She is best when she has an obstacle in the path of her love. This puts her on guard and makes her take time to figure things out. When she deliberates, she can call upon her inner power to make a well-balanced decision.

Alice Maxwell was a typical January-Number 1 girl. She was the only daughter among

[Turn page]

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five children, and this made her exceptionally independent and positive.

## The Green Hat

Several men had courted her, but the one who stood out above all the rest was John Steward—the boss of the shop where three of her brothers worked. He was a bit older than Alice, but very young in his ways. But one thing displeased Alice—that was John's habit of treating her in a brotherly fashion. "If he would only be more romantic!" she often wished.

One night, John took her to a show in a nearby large town and on the way home Alice wanted to stop at the Green Hat road-house.

"That place hasn't a very good reputation," said John.

Alice replied cleverly: "Well I'd be safe anywhere with you—wouldn't I?"

John looked at her questioningly. "How do you mean that?"

Alice colored. She knew what John meant—that she felt he was too old for her—too safe. But she had said it, and the impulse struck her she might make a good thing out of it. After all, if he could become a little reckless and glamorous, it would satisfy her adventurous nature.

Of course, she trusted him. She wouldn't go with a man she couldn't trust—but she did like a fellow who would dare to go to a place like the Green Hat with her just to see what was going on.

## A Foolish Remark

So she followed her impulse. "Maybe you are afraid to take me to the Green Hat. Maybe there is some girl there you wouldn't want me to meet."

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The moment she said it, she realized that it was a foolish remark. But her stubbornness had been kindled and she would make the most of it.

Strangely, John didn't flare up. Had she struck home? The realization made her feel weak. She must love John or she wouldn't feel this way when there was a possibility of another girl—perhaps that torch singer she had read about in the paper!

Finally he said: "Maybe you are right, Alice. Anyway, we won't go to the Green Hat. Isn't there some other place?"

But now Alice wanted to go home—perhaps to cry. Why had she been so impulsive? So she said: "Let's have a soda at the drug store on the corner near my house. Then we can call it a night."

"Just as you say. It might be a good idea to get some sleep."

### A Sleepless Night

Alice couldn't sleep that night. The thought that John might be interested in the Green Hat hostess made her suffer. He didn't love her—he treated her like a child. And now she knew he was the only man she wanted.

She wanted him to be reserved now. She wanted a husband she could trust—who wouldn't want to be daring or glamorous—but would love and cherish her.

John could never love her now. She had insulted him—had taken too much for

[Turn page]

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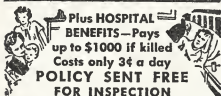
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granted just as she had always done with her brothers, expecting them to bow to her wishes. What she needed was a man she could respect and look up to. John was such a man.

She was late in getting down to breakfast the next morning. Her brothers were about finished.

"Morning—Sis," said her eldest brother. "How was the show?"

She tried to smile as she said "Fine." But she couldn't confess how she had treated their boss. They liked John Steward and had often said what a lucky girl she was to have a fine man like John interested in her.

## The Revelation

But she was about to say, "Tell John I'm sorry about last night," when a brother pointed to the morning paper, and said: "Here's a list of all the fools that were at the Green Hat last night. It was raided at midnight for gambling. John said the place was going to be raided—they had been gyping his men too long and he was putting an end to it."

Alice gasped. So that was it. She hadn't let John explain why he wouldn't take her to the Green Hat. He knew what would happen—wanted to protect her.

She couldn't hold back the tears. And then she had to tell her brothers everything. But they were not excited. They laughed.

"Don't worry, Sis—John won't be mad. He'll get a laugh out of it. He has a sense of humor. He always said you were a lovable little headstrong girl, and some day when you finally woke up, you'd make a swell wife for some man who understood you!"

## A Declaration of Love

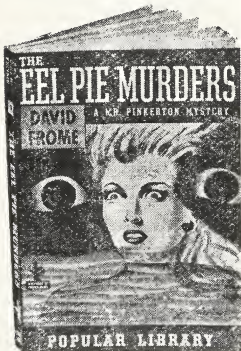
And they were right. The doorbell rang. It was John on his way to work. He came

(Continued on page 96)



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## LOVE NUMEROLOGY

(Continued from page 94)

in. He saw Alice in tears. The brothers winked and left the lovers to themselves.

John smiled. "I thought this might happen, sweet—that is why I dropped in. I think I know you better than you do yourself—you see, I have a sister born on the same day as you. You are alike as two peas. And I love my sister. Won't you let me love you too even though I have to be cruel once in a while? My sister still loves me in spite of it."

"Oh, John," gasped Alice as she fell into his arms. "And I love you too. The thought that you might be in love with a Green Hat hostess made me miserable. Please forgive me!"

## My Number Influence

Have you a Number 3 or 1 in your Numbergraph? You don't have to be born in December or January to have the number influence of Gloria Ferguson or Alice Maxwell.

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Dear Mr. Fels: Optimistic, active, restless, observing and adventurous.

Dear Sylvion:

What is meant by the "Nine greater cycles of the year"?

HELEN JACKSON.

Dear Miss Jackson: Each year can be divided into nine cycles, 40 days for each even number and 41 for each odd, making up the 365 days. The first cycle starts on your birthday. Each cycle carries the influence of the respective number.

Dear Sylvion:

Is there one word that can be applied to each number as a general analysis?

KEE DEMLER.

Dear Miss Demler: Yes. They are: 1. Independence. 2. Perception. 3. Expression. 4. Endurance. 5. Observation. 6. Possession. 7. Reflection. 8. Achievement. 9. Vision.

Dear Sylvion:

Why are letters applied to numbers of the new alphabet instead of the ancient alphabet which was used when numerology was first discovered?

GEORGIA TELLER.

Dear Miss Teller: Because Numerology is a cosmic science and based on thoughts of people—and more people today think in terms of the new alphabet than the old. Lines of force from any dynamo depend on the revolutions of that dynamo.

Dear Sylvion:

What will be the number influence of the year 1944?

JESSIE STEN.

Dear Miss Sten: The double number is 18. The single, 9. It will be a year of vision and greater understanding.

SYLVION.

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